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THE
Independent Whig.

*Nec ullum satis validum Imperium erat
coercendis Seditionibus Populi, flagitia
Hominum ut Ceremonias Deum pro-
tegentis.*

TACIT.



L O N D O N :

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THE

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TO THE
LOWER HOUSE
OF
CONVOCAATION.



YOU, Gentlemen, who
are the Representa-
tives of the Clergy
of *England*, are pro-
per Patrons of a
Work, which treats
of Religion and the Clergy. It is
written to promote Liberty, Virtue and
A 2 Piety;

iv DEDICATION.

Piety ; the Interests of which, I hope, you will always espouse, and esteem as your own ; and will consequently approve my Design, and give me your Thanks, whatever may have been the Success of my Endeavours.

The many wild and unscriptural Claims started, and impetuously maintain'd by very many of those you represent (and I wish I could say denied, though but faintly, by any considerable Number of others) gave Occasion to the following Sheets ; and, having in them shewn to my Brethren, the Laity, the Absurdity and Impiety of those Claims, by Arguments fetch'd from Reason, the Gospel, and the Laws of our Country ; I shall, in this Address to your selves, endeavour to convince you, that it is your Interest to drop them ; and if I can succeed in this Point, I presume, all other Arguments may be useless. These

D E D I C A T I O N. V

These Gentlemen, in the Heat of their Demands and Contention for Power, have gone so far towards *Rome*, and borrowed so many of her Principles, that I see no other Medium left for them, but either to proceed on in their Journey thither, (which, as they have manag'd Matters, is now a very short one) or to turn back to the Principles of the Reformation (a very long Journey, I confess!) and accept of the Bishop of *Bangor's* Scheme, as much as they hate it and him. That Scheme, tho' it may not be altogether so toothsome, yet is a safe Scheme: And tho' it does not entitle them to all the Power and Wealth in *England*, yet it secures to them what they have.

Consider, Gentlemen, that you cannot take as much of Popery as you please, and leave the rest. *Machiavel* has long since told us, that no Govern-

vi DEDICATION.

ment can subsist long but upon its original Foundation, and by recurring often to the Principles upon which it was first founded. It will indeed stand upon no other ; and when that is sap'd and undermined, the Superstructure must fall to the Ground, and the old Inhabitants find out new Materials, and erect new Buildings upon other Foundations ; and they are, for the most part, undone by the Experiment.

The first Principles of our Protestant Church, are the Principles of the Reformation ; namely, the spiritual Supremacy of the Crown ; the Right of the Laity to judge for themselves ; the forming of all Ecclesiastical Polity by the Legislature ; and consequently, that of creating Clergymen by the Civil Power, forgot by too many of the Clergy, and remembred against their Wills by the Laity. Whoever would
main-

maintain the Reformation, must maintain these Principles ; or embrace Popery, if he deserts them. Whether the solemn Oaths of the Clergy in general, have been sufficient Pledges and Motives for their believing and defending them, I appeal to their Behaviour and their Writings.

Being the sworn Servants of the Law, many of them have avowedly contradicted and bid Defiance to the Law ; Being entrusted with serving and instructing the People, they have deceiv'd and set up for commanding the People : Being chosen by the Crown to ministerial Offices, they have claimed a Power above the Crown ; from which they acknowledge, upon Oath, to have received all Power. They have done what in them lay, to make the Mercy of God of none Effect, by damning whom they pleas'd ; and to disarm his

viii DEDICATION.

Justice, by pardoning whom they would. They have made *Heaven it self to wait for the Sentence from the Priest's Mouth*, and God himself to follow the *Judgment of the Priest*. They have pretended to oblige God Almighty to open and shut *Heaven's Gates*. They have asserted, that *the Priesthood is a Princely Power, greater and more venerable than that of the Emperor*: That *the spiritual Government* (that is, a Government by Priests) *is farther above the Civil Power, than Heaven is above the Earth*: That *a Bishop is to be honour'd as God*: That 'the Revenue of Priests
'ought to be greater than the Revenue
'of Kings: That greater Punishment
'is due to an Offence against a Priest,
'than to an Offence against a King:
'That Kings and Queens are to bow
'down before the Priest, with their Face
'towards the Earth, and to lick up the
'Dust of his Feet: That it is the
'Royal

‘ Royal Office of Kings and Queens, to
 ‘ carry the Priest in their Bosom, or on
 ‘ their Shoulders : That great Men
 ‘ ought not to say *my Chaplain*, in any
 ‘ other Sense than we say, MY KING,
 ‘ or MY GOD.

As to the King’s Nomination of Bi-
 shops, and the Power he has over the
 Convocation, they have maintain’d that
 ‘ the Church should as reasonably have
 ‘ the Nomination and deposing of Kings ;
 ‘ and that it is as reasonable that the
 ‘ Parliament should neither meet nor
 ‘ act without the Bishop’s License and
 ‘ Authority : That the Chief Magistrate
 ‘ is bound to submit to the Bishop, who
 ‘ may excommunicate him : That it is a
 ‘ Contradiction and an Impossibility, for
 ‘ any State to have Authority over the
 ‘ Church, that is, over the Priests : That
 ‘ the Priests Power extends to the settling
 ‘ of Fasting, and Feasting, and Clothes :

X DEDICATION.

‘ That those Clergy, who comply with
‘ the Government, and yet retain their
‘ old Principles, are the best Part, and
‘ most numerous of the Clergy ;’ that is,
that those of the Clergy, who are per-
jur’d, are the best and most numerous.
They have decreed, that *to maintain*
that the Sovereignty of England is in the
Three Estates of England, namely, in
Kings, Lords, and Commons, is a dam-
nable Principle. They have asserted,
that the *Lords and Commons have no more*
Share in the making of Laws, than a
Beggar has in one’s Alms : That all Sub-
jects are Slaves as to Life and Property ;
‘ And that Resistance is not lawful for
‘ the Maintenance of the Liberties of our
‘ selves and others ; nor for the Defence
‘ of Religion ; nor for the Preservation
‘ of Church and State ; nor for the Sal-
‘ vation of a Soul ; no, nor for the Re-
‘ demption of the whole World.’

There

There is a choice Catalogue of these extravagant Doctrines, collected in a Pamphlet publish'd some Years since, and entitl'd, *A new Catechism, with Dr. Hickes's 39 Articles*; and all of them taken out of the Writings of Men in the highest Reputation amongst you. Yes, Gentlemen, all these impious, mad and selfish Doctrines have been maintain'd by those of your Order, and never yet contradicted by any publick Act of your Body. On the contrary, with your usual Charity and good Nature, you have fallen upon those who expos'd them; tho' they were evidently the very Corner-Stones of Popery, and a flat Contradiction to the whole Spirit and Progress of the Reformation.

There is no Medium between Popery and the Reformation; that is, between the claiming of any Power in Religion, and the renouncing of all Power

xii DEDICATION.

Power in Religion : (as you will find fully made out in the following Sheets) The latter is the Characteristick of a Protestant Minister, and the former the black Mark of a Popish Priest ; and you have it in your Choice, Gentlemen, which you will chuse to resemble.

If you do not think fit to accept the *Bishop of Bangor's Protestant Scheme*, which is the same with that of the Reformation, and has been ever since the Law of the Land, there is but one Choice left you, namely, that of working about a Popish Revolution, *per fas & nefas* ; and of bringing undisguis'd Popery and the Inquisition into the Church, and direct Slavery upon your Country ; and upon your selves, the Necessity of throwing your selves blindly upon the Mercy of the Court of *Rome*, for her Protection, and Licence
to

to preserve your Dignities and Revenues.

You have no Possibility of keeping clear of the *Pope* and the *Regale* both. The King will not part with his Prerogative ; the Parliament will not give up its Authority ; nor will the People entirely part with their Senses. And for the Bishop of *Rome*, you would do well to remember what tender Usage your Predecessors received at his Hands. He indeed always discountenanc'd and oppress'd them. The lazy Monks, and debauch'd Fryars, were his Darlings, and peculiar Care. They were thoroughly detach'd from the Interests of the Laity, and thorough Dependents upon the Holy Father : They were therefore distinguish'd as his Spiritual Janizaries, and the Guards of the Papacy ; and to them he gave away the Revenues and Maintenance of the
Secular

xiv DEDICATION.

Secular Clergy, not so much trusted by him.

If you remember this, you will easily judge how much more it is your Interest to submit to the easy and gentle Authority of the Prince, and to live under the Protection of the Laws of your Country, by which your Income and all your Immunities are ascertain'd and secur'd to you, than to live expos'd to the Distrusts of a foreign cruel Court, and to the Rapine of foreign and needy Priests, who will be perpetually quarter'd upon you, and drawing Money from you; and when probably it will grow a Maxim in the *Roman Politicks*, that *you must be kept poor*.

But besides, however good the Intentions may be of such amongst your selves, or of those you represent, to become the Subjects, or, as you may
vainly

vainly imagine, the Confederates of *Rome*; they will, in all Likelihood, find it utterly impossible to execute their Designs; and must, in all Appearance, venture their present Possessions upon the Success of such Designs. And if they should happen to succeed, they may have the Glory indeed of the Wickedness; but the Rewards will be, for the most Part, reap'd by new Comers, who had no Share in the Toil. Foreign Ecclesiasticks will be the first in Favour, and the highest in Place: They will carry off your Honours and your Preferments: The Sincerity of your Conversion will be question'd, or pretended to be question'd: There will quickly grow a Distinction between *Old Papists* and *New Converts*; as in *Spain* and *Portugal*, where a wide Difference is made between old Christians and new; which Difference holds for many Generations; and, in short, all Countenance

xvi DEDICATION.

tenance will be shewn, all Favours will be granted, to those who never bow'd their Heads to *Baal*. Your Behaviour to the late *King James* will also be remember'd, tho' you have forgot his to you ; and you will be call'd *Ingrates*, *New Hypocrites*, or *Old Rebels*.

I am in Hopes, Reverend Sirs, that, from all these Considerations, the Gentlemen of these Notions will find Reason to look back to their Original at the Reformation, and to preach up the Principles upon which it stands, since they are like to stand or fall by these Principles. Let them veer about once more ; they know how to do it ; and I will be the first to declare that they have been once in the Right, and once reconcil'd their Views to the Liberties of *England*.

I might likewise fetch an Argument from their awkwardness in Politicks, to convince them that they ought to be Protestants. They have made it manifest, by many Trials and long Experience, that they are but heavy Intriguers, and sadly want both the Temper and Talents of Politicians. The Protestant Religion being a plain one, supported by obvious Truth and common Sense, and requiring no Managements or Fineness to make it go down with the People ; would fit them well enough, if they could be content with it. But it is quite otherwise with the Religion of *Rome* ; which being a surprising Medly of various and contradictory Parts, requires the utmost Address, Delicacy and Skill to keep them from falling to pieces : And, in this Respect, the Church of *Rome* owes its Figure and Preservation to the Court of *Rome*, where all the nicest Secrets of

a

Power

xviii DEDICATION.

Power are understood, and all the most curious Arts in Politicks are practis'd ; where every Absurdity is finely disguis'd, and every Cruelty is artfully conceal'd ; where, in fine, they have the Knack of making People pleas'd with being abus'd, and to forget that they are Slaves, or never to know it.

Hitherto, Gentlemen, it has been otherwise with you : Our Pretenders have but grossly ap'd Popery : Their Aims have been too open, and their Management too coarse. A blunt Demand at once for all the Wealth, and Reverence, and Power of *England*, was so ridiculous, that, had we not before known their unhappy State of Ignorance, we should have thought they had been in Jest when they made it. Nor has that incurable Appetite of theirs, which they cannot hide, of combating Conscience with down-right Force, and brutish

tish Violence, done them less Harm. In short, good Counsel they have seldom taken ; their foolish Counsels they never could conceal ; and, God be thank'd, their wicked Counsels they never yet have been able, thoroughly, to execute ; they, are in truth, but doggerel Politicians. *English Priestcraft* is as coarse as the *Romish Priestcraft* is fine. *Theirs is the Depths of Satan, and OURS his Shallows* ; as is excellently said by the late Mr. *Samuel Johnson*.

The *Romish* Clergy chose the Days of Darkness to sow their Frauds in : They vended their holy Trifles, when Ignorance had increas'd the Number of Buyers : They planted their Power in the fertile Soil of Superstition ; and by keeping the People poor, wretched, ignorant, wicked, and fearful, as they every where do, they still maintain their Dominion.

XX DEDICATION.

But our High Gentlemen, who both know and lament, that this Nation has seen more Days of Light and Liberty (which indeed are seldom separated) since the *Revolution*, than ever it saw before, have yet preposterously chosen that very Time of Light and Liberty to advance all the wildest Claims of Popery, and all the vilest Tenets of Slavery. What could they mean? Did they not know, that the more Men find the Use of their Understanding, the more loth they are to part with it? And that those Men who are willing to part with their Understandings, must have very shallow ones?

The *English* Laity have been us'd pretty much of late, to think for themselves; and we find, as doubtless, Gentlemen, you do, that the more Men know of Church Power, the less they like it. They see that Priestly Pomp
always

always stand on Lay Misery ; that where the Priests are Princes, the People are the lowest Slaves ; and that Church Power always rises with the Fall of Liberty and Knowledge.

The Popish Priests too, as they propagated their lying Tenets in the dark, so they did it slyly, and by well weigh'd Gradations. Every Invention of theirs had its proper Season. The *Fire of Purgatory* was kindled at one time ; *Indulgences* were hatch'd at another. Transubstantiation stole in at a convenient Hour ; and all their Doctrines of Gain and Power, were broach'd at politick Distances, and as Opportunities invited.

But our High Priests, as they have observ'd neither Measure nor Mercy in their Demands upon us ; so neither have they made them at due and

xxii DEDICATION.

discreet Intervals. By over-loading the Cart, they have overturn'd it. They have frighten'd us with the broad and black Cloud of their Pretensions, and made Men unanimously oppose that Heap of Claims and Absurdities, which, had they been wise, we might have been brought to swallow singly. They wanted Patience, as well as Policy.

We were not yet ripe for Popery. We had Judgment enough to see that all those Claims, all those new Doctrines, evidently and solely tended to the Clergy's Advantage, and our Undoing: And we thought it was as consistent with natural Equity and common Sense, that we should be Judges in our own Case, as that you should be in yours. Indeed, if any amongst you had maintain'd Doctrines evidently grievous to your selves, and manifestly tending to the Knowledge and external Happiness of the People,

DEDICATION. xxiii

People, we should at least have thought you in Earnest. If, for Example, you had contended, that the Priests should fast Three Days in the Week, and the Laity only when they pleas'd ; that the Priests should be entirely at the Mercy of the People for a Maintenance ; and shou'd be restrain'd from taking above Thirty or Forty Pounds a Year Sallary ; and forbid all Pomp and Affluence, because they vitiate the Mind, and breed Pride and Laziness, two Faults heinous in a Minister of God : I say, if you had contended for such Liberty in the Laity, and for such rigorous Restraints upon your selves, it wou'd have carried in it the Face of Sincerity and Self-Denial. But, for Priests, who are known to have been, at first, the Alms-men of the People, (and who mostly are still educated by the Charity, and maintain'd by the Benevolence of the Laity) to talk of Palaces, Revenues, nay Thrones

XXIV DEDICATION.

and Principalities, and be for assuming Empire over their Masters, and growing great by the Poverty of the People, is such a stretch of Arrogance and Folly, as cannot be aggravated, as it would not be credible, did we not see it. The Pretensions of the great *Turk* are not half so detestable.

Who would not rather be a Slave to a *Monarch*, than a *Monk*? The Oppression of Temporal Tyrants never has been, and never can be so great as the Oppression of Priests. Temporal Tyrants only make their Slaves as miserable as *Laymen* can do. They take almost their All; but the little that is left, they leave them to use as they please: Whereas the Priest, where he has Power enough, exercises his Tyranny over the Bellies and Palates of his more miserable Vassals, and suffers them to eat (if he leaves them any
Thing

Thing to eat) but what he pleases, and when he pleases.

In Truth, the Subjects of Priests, Abroad, are in a viler State than the Priests Black Cattle : They are worse fed, and not more knowing.

Can you deny, Gentlemen, that the more Power the Priest possesses, just so much the more Men suffer in their Souls and Bodies? Nor can it be otherwise ; Power produces Pride and Debauchery in the Clergy, and Vassallage begets Baseness and Poverty in the People. Whatever is gain'd to the Clergy, is gain'd from the Laity ; so that for them to be rich, we must be Beggars ; and that they may be Lords, we must be Slaves. This I take to be self-evident.

Will

XXVI DEDICATION.

Will you, or can you say, Gentlemen, that, those Claims are conducing to the Welfare of Mankind ; which, where-ever they prevail, do effectually divest Mankind of every Thing that sweetens human Life ; and renders it desiræable, or indeed supportable ? Is that Power for our Benefit, which disarms us of our Faculties, crows our Minds with slavish Fears, and gives us up a Prey to those Men, whose Strength lies in our Weakness, and whose Prosperity is owing to our Undoing ? This is what it has always done, and what it does at this Day in *Spain*, *Italy*, and other Priest-ridden Countries : And this is what it would as effectually do in *England*, if *Englishmen* would suffer it.

These Claims of yours, Gentlemen, have done you great Prejudice. They have made Men afraid of your Spirit, which

D E D I C A T I O N. xxvii

which seems to them to be merciless and insatiable. So that, if you are begrudg'd what you have, you may thank your selves ; it is owing to your claiming what you ought not to have. If a Clergyman enjoys the Tythes of Part of my Estate, by Virtue of the Law ; and not content with that, would have Tythes of the Whole, in Spite of the Law ; it is natural enough for me to think that the Man is a Knave, who would have no Man's Property secur'd by the Law but his own.

Nothing is more common with you than to call the Impropropriations of the Abbey-Lands, by the dreadful Name of *Sacrilege*. You say, and some of you have said it in Print, and many more in the Pulpit, that such Impropropriation was robbing the Church. What Church, Gentlemen ? Was it not the Church of *Rome* ? And are you of that

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Church ?

Church? It is certain, that the *reform'd Protestant Church of England* never possess'd any of these Lands. And how you, who are *Protestants*, and not Successors to the *Monks*, can hold from the *Popish Monks*, by divine Right, Lands and Immunities, which these gluttonous and cheating Vermin acquir'd by diabolical Rogueries; is such a Riddle as can only come from Ecclesiasticks, but can never be solved by Laymen. Did you ever hear, Gentlemen, that the primitive Preachers of *Christ*, set up for being Heirs to the Riches and Revenues of the *Heathen Temples*, when they were deserted or demolish'd? And, in my Opinion, these Pagan Revenues were more honestly got, as well as more innocently us'd, than the Lands and Income of the *Popish Monasteries*.

Our

Our Gentlemen of this Cast have long provok'd one Part of the World, and deceiv'd the other, by their Cant of *Divine Right*; which, tho' a very Jest in it self, and long since exploded, is a Title they clap to all their Possessions, let them come by them how they will. This is shameful Boldness. It is certain the Gospel has not given you one Foot of Land, or one Shilling of Money; nor did ever God Almighty appear personally to do it by Word of Mouth. Your Church is a Creature of the Constitution, and you are the Creatures of the Law: And you most evidently belie Divine Right, if you pretend to derive from thence, what all the World sees you owe to secular Bounty; I will not say to devout Frauds.

If you could be but perswaded to reconcile your Principles and Pretensions

ons to the Security and Happiness of Mankind, all Mankind wou'd be reconcil'd to you and your Pretensions. I do not remember to have ever heard the Clergy contemn'd, where they did not first deserve Contempt. When any of them depart from the Meekness of Ministers, no Body will pay them the Regard due to Ministers; such who intermeddle in every Thing, will be respected in nothing. Such who oppose every publick Good, and every Action favourable to Liberty, and beneficent to the World, will be deem'd Foes to Liberty, and to the World. Such who promote Strife, and Persecution, will be reckon'd Enemies to Peace and Charity; and those who are at the Head of all publick Mischiefs, will themselves be thought a publick Mischief. If they promote the known Principles, and endeavour to support the known and main Pillars of Popery, can they expect

expect to be treated as Protestants? If they promote Rebellion, and practice Perjury, can they either be accounted good Subjects or Christians? And if they are the Patrons of Tyranny, and the Promoters of Immorality, what Quarter can they expect to find in a *Free Country*, or amongst *Men of Virtue*?

If you ask me, *why all this from a Layman to his ghostly Guides*? The Answer is ready—The Work was necessary; and, Gentlemen, those of your Order made it necessary: The Interest of Truth and Liberty was concern'd; and, indeed, at Stake; by the constant Attacks of those of your Robe upon them: which Attacks were so far from being disavowed by you, that the wicked Authors of them were not only treated as the Chief Champions of the Church's Cause; but

but all who oppos'd them have been fallen upon with the sternest Outrage, and the utmost Bitterness of Spirit; together with lying Calumnies, uncharitable Suggestions, and base and brutish Language; their usual Weapons, Offensive and Defensive.

It is worth while to mention the great Want of Sincerity in the Conduct of such Men on this Occasion. Whenever they think it seasonable, in Conversation, to uphold the mad Principles of *Hickes*, and of the other Protestant Papists and Nonjurors, (tho', if ever there was such a Thing as Blasphemy in the World, it is to be met with in their Writings, in the most daring Colours) they never fail to shew themselves their Advocates. But when they think that a Defence of these Reveries will do a Prejudice to the Cause, with those of your
People,

DEDICATION. xxxiii

People, who have a Notion of Religion and the *Reformation*; or among Men, who, they know, can expose these Reveries: Then, Gentlemen, they either shamelessly deny that these Writers maintain what they do maintain; or say, that the Clergy are not answerable for the Whimfies of particular Doctors.

These dishonest Shifts, these base Practices, compounded of Knavery and Lies, are common amongst too many of your Order. Yes, Gentlemen, to the Disgrace of common Candour, and the Reproach of Religion, they are very common amongst the High Clergy. I my self have frequently found them; and, I believe, every one, who has had any Conversation with them, has as frequently found them.

XXXIV DEDICATION.

Now, that these Principles (several of which I have already laid together in this *Dedication*) are asserted in the Books of your Non-swearing and Forswearing Brethren, I appeal to the Books themselves: That they are impious, false, Antichristian, and Destructive of Human Society, of all Social Virtues, and all Social Happiness, I appeal to common Sense, and to the known State of those miserable Countries where they prevail: And, that they have been either adopted, or approv'd by all the High Clergy, I appeal to their many Quotations from them, and to their constantly opposing every Proceeding against them.

Gentlemen, it is of much Consequence to you, to clear your selves from the Imputation of maintaining or adhering to such ungodly, such mischievous Tenets: Tenets, which
with-

D E D I C A T I O N. XXXV

without consulting the reveal'd Will of God, appear detestable to the common Light of Reason. Tenets, which abrogate the Justice and Mercy of God, and call his very Being in Question; and Tenets, which would for ever banish all Peace and Security from amongst Men, and from the Face of the Earth. Consider, that you cannot take one Step in asserting or countenancing them, without direct Perjury. You have, upon Oath, renounced *all Power, of any kind or sort whatsoever*, but what you receive from the *King* and the *Law*: Will you, after this solemn Appeal to God, by an Oath, sacred amongst *Barbarians* and *Infidels*, appeal to all the World that you are perjur'd, by maintaining, as too many do in their Writings and Sermons, that they have a Power, which they neither derive from the *King* nor the *Law*?

XXXVI DEDICATION.

Sure it must be a melancholly Reflection to these Gentlemen, in Point of Credit and Reputation (for I say nothing of Conscience) that, whilst they thus distinguish themselves from *Low-Churchmen*, whose great Crime consists in not mocking God, and leaping over Conscience and Oaths ; they do, at the same time, distinguish themselves from *Christianity* it self, which, above all other Religions, disclaims Power, and more than all other Religions, abhors *Insincerity* and *false Swearing*.

Can you, Gentlemen, reconcile their Behaviour, since the *Revolution*, to the Understanding of the People, or to any Man's Conscience but their own ? If the Doctrine of *Hereditary Right* is true, as many of them eternally and fiercely contend, how could they swear to Princes made by *Act of Parliament* ? And if the Doctrine of *Passive Obedience* is

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true,

DEDICATION. XXXVII

true, how came they to swear to a Government founded upon open and evident Resistance, and to be instrumental themselves in that Resistance? Their particular Behaviour to His present Majesty, cannot yet be forgot. Be so good to let us know, what Security He found from their Oaths; or what Assistance the High Clergy gave Him against the late Rebellion, in pursuance of these Oaths? Can Men, who shew, by glaring Actions, that they value not their own Souls, do any Good to the Souls of other Men?

If you would clear your selves from the Imputation of supporting or favouring such monstrous Principles, you must do it openly and avowedly, in full and express Words, free from that Equivocation which some of your Order are much suspected of, upon the most solemn and sacred Occasions. You have

xxxviii DEDICATION.

been ready enough to censure many good Books, and many worthy Propositions: Be ingenuous for this once, Gentlemen; expose the Blasphemies of those of your own Body, and brand the Authors of them with those Names of Infamy which they deserve, and which you never want whenever you think fit to *call Names*. And if you fairly renounce ill Company, you will not be censur'd, as you have been, for not censuring their Impieties. The *Convocation* at *Oxford*, in the Days of Tyranny, were sufficiently forward and explicite in damning, by their detestable *Decree*, since worthily burnt by the proper Hand of the common Hangman, by Order of the Legislature; I say, that black Assembly were forward and clear enough in damning all those Principles of Liberty, which ever have been and ever will be the Principles of *Wise Men* and *Free Men*. Consult your own

Repu-

DEDICATION xxxix

Reputation and the Welfare of Mankind, by treading Antipodes to that wicked Assembly.

I cannot pass over in Silence, that shameful want of Charity found amongst too many of you, and every Day complain'd of to no purpose. Allowing Charity to be a Christian Grace (and the Apostle calls it the highest) I would be glad to know in what Instance you practise that Grace your selves, or promote it in others. As to such who deny the regular Means of Salvation to all Communions, except their own and that of *Rome*, they bring this Charge home to their own Door; since their Courtesy to those of the same Spirit with themselves, and their good Opinion of them, is not Charity, but Self-love and *Faction*. Highwaymen, no doubt, call one another honest Fellows, as frequently and habitually as other

Men do ; whereas their Honesty is only a wicked Fidelity to a Nest and Confe-deracy of Rogues, and they are only honest to their Fellow-Thieves : But true Honesty is the same to all Men, and to all Men alike.

The like may be said of Charity ; it is tried and exercised upon those who are of a Persuasion different from ours. But to flatter and be complaisant to those of the same Imaginations, or the same Craft with our selves, merely because they are of the same Craft, is such a new-fangled Charity, as would beat the old *Christian* Charity of *St. Paul* quite out of the World : And yet that this is the true Cause and the true State of modern Orthodox Charity, appears abundantly from hence, that the most wicked good Churchman has more Complement paid him, and more Favour shewn him, than the most righteous

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ous, most godly Dissenter. Nay, by the servile Court paid by many, very many, to those of their Patrons, who lived Libertines, and died Atheists; and by their barbarous Usage of peaceable, religious, Dissenters, (blameable only for being Dissenters) it would seem as if Virtue were no longer the Object of their Affection, nor Vice of their Aversion.

For God's sake, Gentlemen, abandon this damning Spirit, which is a Contradiction to Religion, and a Reproach to Humanity; assume Charity for all Men, or drop all Pretensions to Christianity; learn to be temperate and well-bred, or cease claiming to be Gentlemen: Leave reviling, as you would be thought Preachers and Exhorters; and, as you would be thought Successors to the Apostles, concern not your selves with worldly Power, of which the Apostles had None. You

xlili DEDICATION.

You would not fure be thought a Sett of Ecclefiasticks, detach'd both from *Christians* and *Heathens*; and yet, by contending not only for worldly Power, but for independent worldly Power, superior to all the Powers of the World, you shew, as many of you as do so, that you are a Discredit to Christians, and yet are worse than Heathens. It was the good Counsel of *Bishop Hall* to *Laud*, who was confounding all Things Human and Divine, that he would be *either Fish or Flesh*; *either throw away his Wings, or pull out his Claws*. For God's sake, Gentlemen, tell us what Religion you are of?—I mean such of you as assert the Positions above quoted. To what Class of Religions, think you, these Men belong? To None, certainly, that ever was in the World. They cannot even make consistent Papists, tho' That seems to be their highest Am-

D E D I C A T I O N. xliii

Ambition. Their Popery, I own, is true Popery, and yet it is Popery without a *Pope*. I cannot speak so favourably of the Christianity they pretend to; tho' That too is Christianity without Christ, who was all Meekness, Humility, and Love; who was Omnipotent, but disclaim'd all Power; who was Infallible, and yet would Judge no Man—Are you, Gentlemen, his Successors? Do your Champions resemble this Picture? They are poor, frail, erring, mortal Men, and yet wou'd act as if they were omnipotent, and dictate as if they were infallible. Good God! Gentlemen, what Madness to deal thus with us before they had burnt our Bibles, or put out our Eyes.

Do we not see Clergymen actuated by as savage and unreasonable Passions as any Sett of Men living? And would
you

you pretend to govern absolutely those who have at least as much Virtue, Sense and Sobriety, as your selves; who, as 'tis plain from your Lives, cannot govern yourselves better than others? Have we not seen their Heads as deep in wicked Counsel, and their Hands as deep in Crimes, as the Heads and Hands of any Society of Men upon Earth? And can you expect that we will trust the most important Care in the World, the Care of our Souls, to Men who take no Care of their own; or rather do not seem to think they have any? What Opinion, think you, can we have of their Power with Heaven, when we behold them incessantly contending for, and pursuing Power upon Earth, which is inconsistent with the Ways of Heaven? It is Time, high Time, Gentlemen, to give over, and to remember that we neither want Eyes nor Memory.

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There has been a long and almost general Charge against the Clergy of all Ages and Countries, for neglecting to preach and enforce as much and as clearly as they ought, the great Doctrines of Morality, the best Mark of Religion, and the best Stay of Human Society : It is indeed Religion it self ; and that Religion which does not produce Morality, deserves another Name. Morality is the only Religion which Human Society, considered as such, has any Occasion to see practis'd. If a Man is really Moral, neither the Civil Magistrate, nor his Fellow Citizens, ought to have any Concern what he believes, or how he believes. Our Actions are in our Power, but our Thoughts are not, no more than our Dreams : Belief necessarily follows Evidence ; and where the Evidence does not appear sufficient, a Man cannot believe if he would : There was Virtue in the
World

World before there was *Orthodoxy* in it ; which hard, equivocal, priestly Word, has done more Mischief to Mankind, than all the Tyrants that ever plagued the Earth. This is worthy the Consideration of the Laity. Yes, Gentlemen, *Orthodoxy* has made many Tyrants, and exceeded All. What can be said to this *Fact*?

I allow, that Priests often contend for good Works ; but, without a Paradox, the good Works they contend for, are, for the most Part, not only not Morality, but, on the contrary, are often very wicked and sinful. The Endowing of Churches and Monasteries is, for Example, with them a great good Work ; and yet it has generally prov'd a mischievous Liberality, which evidently hurt Religion and Human Society, and frequently destroyed Both. I call upon you, Gentlemen, to shew where and when the
Chri-

DEDICATION. xlvii

Christian Religion ever thriv'd or gain'd by Riches? I, on my Side, can shew that they have been always Poyson to it. Riches first made Priests Rampant, and such Priests soon defaced and ruin'd Religion; but still more or less effectually, as their Revenues and Power were greater or smaller. Christianity flourished most when it had neither worldly Priests nor worldly Endowments. Will you deny this? In short, their preaching good Works has been generally preaching themselves, who were the chief Gainers by them. And as to those good Works which did not promise any Advantage to the Clergy, they either always oppos'd them, or never encourag'd them. We cannot forget your Behaviour at the Beginning of our present Charity-Schools, how you every where oppos'd them, till you had got the Management of them into your own Hands;

Hands ; and now you as violently promote them out of other Mens Pockets. Whether your Government of those Schools promotes the Welfare of the Common-wealth, (if you can bear that Word) appears abundantly from the bitter and disaffected Spirit found in them.

By *Morality*, therefore, is meant a Thing quite different from such *good Works*. *Morality* is Natural Religion, which prompts us to do Good to all Men, and to all Men alike, without Regard to their Speculations, no more than to their Cloaths, or to the Colour of their Hair, which is as much in their Power as their Faith is. *Morality* is a social Virtue, or rather the Mother of all social Virtues : It wishes and promotes unlimited and universal Happiness to the whole World : It regards not a *Christian* more than a *Jew* or an *Indian*, any further than as he is

a better Citizen ; and not so much, if he is not.

Barbeyrac, in his excellent Preface to his Translation of *Puffendorf de Jure Naturæ & Gentium*, has shewn us, by a fine Detail of Passages, how the *Pagan*, the *Jewish*, and too many *Christian* Priests, have all ever agreed in concealing, disguising, mangling, calumniating, and opposing the eternal Principles of *Morality* or *Natural Religion*. The Religion of these holy Hirelings consisted either in a long Rout of Ceremonies, as tedious as ridiculous ; or in certain abstruse Points, which could never be known, and were not worth knowing ; and always in great Pomp and Pride ; and in Dominion, where they could get it. It was either a Religion of the Body, or a Religion of the Imagination, or a Religion of Shew, Profit and Terror. In fine, the blessed Clubs

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1 *The* DEDICATION.

of Ecclesiasticks of all Religions, in whatever else they differ'd, yet always accorded in this, that the Religion they contriv'd, agreed neither with Heaven nor Earth, neither with Reason nor good Humour, but only fitted themselves and their own Views.

Mr. *Barbeyrac*, in his Preface, has given us a diverting Specimen of the Absurdities and Ravings of those Reverend old Gentlemen, whom we call *the Fathers*. And in all the Instances he brings, it is hard, if not impossible to say, whether the Uncharitableness, Roguery, or Stupidity of these old Saints, appears uppermost.

This Preface is every way so excellent, that I have prevail'd upon a Friend of mine, a Gentleman of *Gray's-Inn*, to translate it into *English*, for the Instruction of the Laity. A Reverend Divine or

Two

The DEDICATION. ii

Two have translated the Book it self; but no Divine has yet thought fit to give us the Preface. My Countrymen may therefore soon expect it from him, with an Introduction.

Gentlemen, I have but two Questions to ask of you, and I have done. Pray to what is it owing, that the usual Spirit and Zeal of this Nation against Popery, are now quite extinct; inso-much, that in the Neighbourhood of great Popish Families, your Flocks grow daily thinner, and the Mass-houses stronger; as I am able to shew in some Instances? And, Secondly, what is become of the Bundle of Papers sent by Mr. *Leslie* to a former Convocation, and containing a Project for a Union between the Protestant Church of *England* and the Popish Church of *France*? And I desire you will acquaint the World with the Reasons, why no Notice or Censure was passed upon them.

I

lii *The* DEDICATION.

I shall say nothing here of the usual way taken to answer Antagonists, not by Reason or Scripture, but by downright Force, Hardships and Oppression. The late posthumous Sermon of *Daniel Burgess*, call'd, *The Craftsmen*, has done this to my Hand ; and therefore I haste to conclude.

I am, GENTLEMEN,

Your most Humble and

most Obedient Servant,

The Independent Whig.



THE
Independent Whig.

NUMBER I.

*Iustum & tenacem propositi virum
Non civium ardor prava iubentium,
Non vultus instantis tyranni
Mente quatit solidâ.*

H O R A T. Lib. 3. Od. 3.

Wednesday, January 20. 1720.

The INTRODUCTION.



HOEVER goes about to reform the World, undertakes an Office obnoxious to Malice, and beset with Difficulties. It speaks a Confidence of his own Capacity, which prompts him to set up for the School-master
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2 *The Independent Whig.*

of Mankind ; and it infers a Charge of Corruption or Ignorance in his Pupils, out of which he assumes to whip them. As every Man has a good Conceit of his own Merit, he thinks himself undervalued by Instruction, and is provoked by Correction. The Confession of our own Weakness, and that of another's better Sense, is generally both contained in the taking of Advice, which is seldom taken for that Reason.

Besides, Blindness and Prejudice are seldom to be resigned but with Pain ; and therefore, for the most Part, are not resigned at all. It is but an unacceptable Civility to offer to let in the Rays of Understanding upon those Minds, which are used to subsist in the Dark. It is like opening Day-Light upon a Nest of Owls ; it always sets them a Screetching.

However, the Difference is considerable between natural and acquired Ignorance, and the last is much more incurable than the first. The one is capable, and often willing, to be informed ; whereas the other thinks it self above it, and is too wise to learn. There can be no Cure for one who is taught to be a Blockhead : His Ignorance is the Fruit of Instruction, and has cost him great Pains ; and so his Pride is engaged to support it. As he has improved his Mind into learned Darkness, so he stands upon his Guard against Common Sense, is Proof against all the Assaults of Reason, and scorns its Power. If he

he does not take you for his Enemy, and use you accordingly; yet, at least, he will pity your Mistakes, and perhaps pray for your Illumination.

It will probably be said, by some of my Readers, that I here describe my self and my own Performances, and perhaps with too much Truth. There lived, not long since, a Poet, who made excellent Criticisms upon the most applauded Plays, and afterwards writ one himself obnoxious to them all.

But neither these, nor any other Difficulties, or Discouragements, shall hinder me from the generous Attempt of endeavouring to reform Mankind. I have the Magnanimity to face them all, and set about the Work; though I am sufficiently sensible of the Greatness of the Design, and have long wished that some abler Genius would have undertaken it.

I confess there have been some seeming Attempts of this Kind, which were carried on with great Dexterity and Wit, and brought great Credit and other valuable Advantages to the Authors; but I should be glad to know what Service they have done to the Publick. The exposing of small Faults can do but small Service; and People may be singular in their Humours, and vain in their Dress, without hurting humane Society. A Beau may wear a fine Coat, and a gaudy Sword-Knot, without prejudicing the Common-wealth, or in-

4 *The Independent Whig.*

deed any one Member of it: Nor can I see any dreadful Malignity in a hooped Petticoat. A Lady may keep a Squirrel, and diversify her Face with Fifty Patches on a Side, without invading private or publick Property. There is no Mischief in a harmless Snuff-Box, or a Diamond-Ring; nor do laced Cloaths, or a clouded Cane, prejudice Trade; nor the flirting of a Fan shake our Constitution. A terrible Fellow with a long Sword may be a peaceable Neighbour; and a Coquet may salute her Lap-Dog, and yet not endanger our Liberties.

These little Sallies and Excrescencies of Humour, as they give real Pleasure and Happiness to the Proprietors themselves, so they often entertain wiser People, who might otherwise grow too severe for want of a little Laughing. And yet, I will own, that many Papers, upon that Subject, have justly merited universal Esteem and Admiration.

But the greater and more important Mischiefs, which afflict Humane Society, have been, for the most Part, left untouch'd by our finest Writers; and Priestcraft and Tyranny have been seldom attacked by any, but rather flattered and supported. Mr. *Saville* is said to have replied to a *Frenchman*, who exulted upon the fine Writings of his Countrymen, *That there were but Two Subjects in Nature worth a Wise Man's Thoughts, namely, Religion and Government, and they durst*
Speak

Speak of neither. But it is our peculiar Happiness to live in a Country, where we may speak our Minds freely and openly upon any Subject, within the Bounds of good Manners and Virtue; which, I hope, I shall never transgress.

I own, the *Free-Thinker* is a useful, as well as a fine Paper. I have seen some Discourses of his, which, in my Opinion, are inimitable; especially those upon *Superstition* and *Enthusiasm*. Most that come from him are instructive, and all are elegant. I hope so worthy a Writer has suitable Encouragement. I have not the good Fortune to know that ingenious and deserving Gentleman; but I am told that, besides his Capacity and publick Principles, and the Work he is now engaged in, he has done personal Services to the Government, which, in any other Country, would entitle him to a very good Station in it: If he has none in *this*, it is, no doubt; owing to the publick Spirit of the Great; who will, by no Fault or Courtesy of theirs, divert him from instructing his Country twice a Week. I shall only add upon this Head, that as no Man is so well qualify'd as the *Free-Thinker* himself to execute his own Plan, mine will not by any Means interfere with his, as will be shewn in my next Paper.

There was one Weekly Paper, which, had it gone on, would have prevented this; I mean, the *Free-Thinker Extraordinary*. It breathed an uncommon Spirit of publick Li-

6 *The Independent Whig.*

berty, and shewed sufficiently the Capacity of the Author to do Service to Mankind. But when he had shewed his Skill, and engaged our Attention, he dropped us and his Subject, and made it necessary, though dangerous, to succeed him. It was never asked why he undertook it; for every one saw the Reasons and Advantages of it: But why he deserted it, has been the Subject of Enquiry; and the rather, because it was evident he wanted neither Art nor Materials.

For my self, who have no manner of Attachment to any Party, I shall not be afraid to speak my Mind of All, with that Freedom which becomes Truth and Independency; and the flattering of Power, in any Shape or Hands whatsoever, shall be the last Charge against me.

There is no Power in Names to consecrate Persons or Things, or to alter their Nature; and yet the Majority of Mankind have always worshipped the Idols of Words and Sounds; and a Monosyllable has often done more than an Army, towards keeping them under Awe and Servitude. In Catholick Countries, the Word *Pope*, or *Priest*, carries with it more Reverence than does the Old or New Testament, and more Terror than an armed Host. And lately in *France*, the Words, *Grand Monarque*, or the *Glory* of the *Grand Monarque*, could keep a vast Nation in Misery and Wooden-Shoes, and carry a Hundred

dred Thousand of them at a Time to the Slaughter.

This blind Devotion to Names, so inconsistent with true Liberty, which shews it self in *Judging* as well as *Acting*, has also prevailed in this free Nation to a shameful and dangerous Degree. We know what terrible Lengths the Words *Church*, *Clergy*, *Divine Right*, and the like undefined Nonsense, have gone towards enslaving us; and what a steady and ridiculous Reverence is still paid to them, even when they are evidently apply'd to the most impious and tyrannical Purposes.

Nor does this Charge of *worshipping Words*, lie altogether at the Door of one Party only. Even that Side, which boasts a greater Share of Reason and Freedom, is manifestly guilty of the like Idolatry to Names and Persons, and in Instances of the greatest Importance. They do not consider the Speech, but the *Speaker*; nor what is done, but the *Doer*; and consequently praise, *by the Great*, in their own Leaders, what they would loudly condemn in any others.

Credulity and implicit Belief are equally as dangerous in Government as in Religion: They have made the World Slaves, and they keep it so. Every Party has its Pope, and some have several; who, like him at *Rome*, never fail to make an ill Use of the Faith of their Followers, and deceive those who trust in them.

8 *The Independent Whig.*

I have said thus much to apprize the Reader, that this will be an Independent Paper, which will stoop to no Party, nor have any Friends or Enemies, but such as make themselves so, by espousing the Interests of Truth or Falshood.

N U M B E R I I.

Wednesday, January 27. 1720.

The Design of this PAPER.



RELIGION was designed by Heaven, for the Benefit of Men alone. It teaches us to moderate our Desires, calm our Passions, and be useful and beneficent to one another; and whatever does not contribute to those Ends, ought not to be called by that Name. For, Almighty God has infinite Happiness in himself, which we can neither diminish nor add to; and therefore he can require nothing of us, but for our own Sakes; nor command any Thing but what tends to our own Good, both here and hereafter.

I say it with the utmost Sincerity, that no Man living desires to pay a more true and affectionate Esteem and Reverence than myself to those Clergymen, who answer this End of their Institution, and whose Lives and Manners grace and adorn their Profession and Doctrine.

I thank God, I know many such; and perceive, with Pleasure and Transport, a noble Spirit of Liberty and true Religion rising up among them; which will soon flame out far and wide, if it is not stifled by those, whose true Interest and Honour call aloud to them to give it Assistance and Protection.

That Profession must be always most honourable and deserving from Mankind, which is most useful and advantageous to them. As it is therefore impossible to shew too much Respect to virtuous Clergymen, so the corrupt Part of them cannot be too much expos'd. As the Possession which they have of the Fears and Panick of superstitious People, and in the tenderest Seasons too, enable them to do the greatest Mischief, so the strongest Antidotes ought to be applied to their Poison. It will be ridiculous to call for Protection from that Character, which they constantly disgrace, and to ask Assistance from the Religion, which they neither believe nor practise.

I here list myself under the Banners of the former sort; and design by this Work to illustrate the Beauty of Christianity, by exposing
sing

sing the Deformity of Priestcraft; and to distinguish the good Clergy from the bad, by giving to each his Share of Praise or Infamy, according to the different Deeds done by them. I will lose no Opportunity of doing Justice to the former, nor willingly to the latter.

In doing this, I shall go far backward, and taking Things from the Beginning, shew in the Course of these Papers, the infinite Evils brought upon Mankind, from Age to Age, by the Pride and Imposture of corrupt Ecclesiasticks: I shall shew what a *Babel* they have built upon the Foundation of Christ and his Apostles, who were made to father Doctrines which they never taught; and to countenance Power which they always disclaimed. I shall shew by what Arts and Intrigues they came, from being Alms-Men of the People, to be Masters of Mankind; and how, by pretending to dispose of the *Other World*, they actually usurped and ruled *This*.

I shall shew, that notwithstanding Christianity was first propagated by Miracles and Mildness only, and the Teachers of it had no Power but to persuade; making it withal appear, in the whole Course of their Lives and Preaching, that they sought no Manner of personal Advantage, or any Manner of Jurisdiction over their Hearers and Converts; yet they who, without their Inspiration and Manners, called themselves their Successors, did by Virtue of their Names, lay insolent Claim to Dominion, and carried all Things before them, by the Dint of Terror and Excommunication. I

The Independent Whig. II

I shall shew that though the Clergy, like other Militia, were raised and paid for protecting Mankind from their Spiritual Enemy, yet they soon made use of the Sword put into their Hands against their Masters, and set up for themselves. I shall shew that notwithstanding the whole End of their Institution was to make Men wiser and better, yet wherever *They* prevailed, Debauchery and Ignorance also prevailed; and the constant Lesson they taught was blind Belief and blind Obedience, of both which they made themselves the Objects. So that Superstition was an inseparable Creature of their Power, and the perpetual Issue of it; and tainted Morals and darkened Minds were the great Props of their Dominion. A good Understanding, and an inquisitive Spirit, led directly to Heresy; and a pious Life was of ill Example, and a Reproach to the Clergy; and if any one gave Offence this Way, it was but calling him *Heretick*, and delivering him over to *Satan*, and the Man was undone, and the Clergy safe.

I shall shew how they soon banished the meek Spirit of the Christian Religion, and growing to as great Variance with Mercy as they were with Reason, perverted Religion into Rage, and Zeal into Cruelty. They made the peaceable Doctrine of Jesus a Doctrine of Blood, and excommunicated and damned by that Name, by which alone Men could be saved. It is true, they damned
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12 *The Independent Whig.*

one another as much as they did other People; for, agreeing in nothing but the great Principle of Interest, tho' they rode upon the Necks of their People, yet they never could be at Peace, nor Ease, among themselves, so long as each Individual was not in the highest Place: And therefore, because every one of them could not be above all the rest, they were eternally quarrelling, and giving one another to the Devil.

If one of them held any Proposition, true or false, it was Reason enough for another to deny it, and *curse* him into the Bargain. At last, there was not one Principle in their System but what was contested, and they agreed in nothing but their own Power; tho', at the same Time, they disputed what that was.

In this everlasting Scuffle and Civil War, they had so mangled Truth, and muffled it up, that few could distinguish it from the false Images they had made of it. And yet these Men, who, by their constant Discords and Debates, confess'd themselves in endless Uncertainties, were the sure and infallible Guides to others, who were obliged to believe their Guesses and Contradictions, on Pain of Hell-Fire.

I shall shew what a shameful Hand they have always had in bringing and keeping Mankind under Tyranny and Bondage to such Princes as would divide the Spoil with them. In such Case, it was a Point of Conscience, and a religious Duty, for Subjects to be miserable Slaves; and Damnation but to strive

strive to be Happy. But if the Prince happen'd to be a Lover of Mankind, and endeavour'd to protect his People in their Civil and Sacred Rights; then were they the constant Incendiaries of every popular and wicked Faction. They preached nothing but Sedition and Blood, till they had worked up their blind and stupid Votaries to Rebellions and Assassinations; and to such Conduct is owing a great Part of their Power and Wealth.

I think no one, who is the least conversant with Ecclesiastical History, will deny but this was the Condition of Christianity before the *Reformation*; and the chief Intent of this Paper is to let all the World know it, that they may be upon their Guard against the like Mischiefs. It is certain, that the Demands of the High Clergy, upon the Laity, are as great, if not greater, than they were at that Time. As *Father Paul* says of *England*, *The Horse is Bridled and Saddled, and the old Rider is just getting upon his Back.*

It is Time now to conclude this Paper, by saying, if my hearty Endeavours shall any ways contribute to detect the Impostures, and expose the wicked Practices of those, who, under the prostituted Name of Sanctity, are Foes to Truth, to Liberty, and Virtue, I shall think my Time and Pains well spent. But if not, I shall have the Internal Satisfaction of having attempted at least to
attack

14 *The Independent Whig.*


attack Vice and Corruption, however dignified or distinguished; and the worst which can be said of me is,

Magnis tamen excidit ausis.

NUMBER III.

Wednesday, February 3. 1720.

Of the Contempt of the Clergy.

RING the Bells backward! The Temple, the Temple is on Fire! The High Priests look aghast, and the People stare, and all cry out, The Craft, the Craft is in Danger!

This I expected, and was prepared for, when I first engaged in the Undertaking: Touch a galled Horse and he will wince, tho' 'tis in order to cure him. I knew a Gentleman, who found out a Murderer by looking stedfastly in his Face: When any one is conscious of his own Crimes or Infirmities, he is jealous of every Approach towards a Discovery, and often makes one by it.

It

It is remarkable, that no Order or Society of Men is so apprehensive of Disrespect, or can so little bear the Examination into their Pretensions, as the greatest Part of the Ecclesiasticks : If you ridicule or laugh at the Professions of Law and Physick, the Lawyers and Physicians will laugh with you : The same is true of Soldiers, Merchants, and the Professors of almost all Arts and Sciences, who generally are the first to expose the Knaves and Fools amongst them.

If a Lawyer, Soldier, or Merchant, deserves the Pillory; neither *Westminster-Hall*, the *Army*, or the *East-India* Company, are in an Uproar; or complain that the Law, Trade, or the Soldiery, are wounded thro' his Sides; nor endeavour to raise a Mobb in his Behalf, or rebel in Token of their unlimited Submission to Government. The fair Sex do not think themselves ill used, when a Baud is ty'd to a Cart, or naughty Nymph beats Hemp: The Eleven Apostles lost no Credit when *Judas* hang'd himself; nor would any honest Clergyman, tho' ever so many of the other Sort did the same, or if it was done for them.

But I do not know by what Judgment or Fatality it happens, that if you but touch the Pretences or Vices of the Meanest of the Ecclesiasticks, so many of their Body are in an Uproar : They roar aloud, their Order is exposed, their Mysteries derided and profaned, and Religion it self in Danger of being sub-
verted,

16 *The Independent Whig.*

verted; and *Socinian*, *Deist*, or *Atheist*, is the best Word, that is often given to their best Friend; and sometimes all of them are given.

All other Societies of Men are contented with the Esteem and Honour, which result from the Usefulness of their Employments and Professions, and the Worth and Capacity of their Members; and yet none stand in such a Situation, and have so many Advantages to acquire Respect and Homage, as the Clergy.

Their Office is evidently adapted to promote the Welfare of Humane Nature, and to propagate its Peace and Prosperity in this World, as well as its eternal Felicity in the next; so that it is the Interest of all Men to honour it; and none but a Madman will condemn and ridicule what has a manifest Tendency to the Security and Happiness of all Mankind.

The Temporal Condition of the Clergy does likewise place them far above Contempt: They have great Revenues, Dignities, Titles, and Names of Reverence, to distinguish them from the rest of the World; and it is too well known that Wealth, Power, and Learning, carry to the Vulgar a kind of Mystery, and distant Grandeur, and command not only Admiration and Reverence, but often a superstitious Veneration.

Added to this, they have the Possession and Direction of our Fears, and are admitted
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in Health and Sicknefs: Every *Sunday* they have the ſole Opportunity to gain our Eſteem by worthy and uſeful Inſtructions, and all the Week by their good Lives: They educate us whiſt young, influence us in our middle Age, and govern us in our Dotage, and we neither live nor die without them.

A numerous Body of Men, ſo conſtituted and endow'd, ſo privileged and poſted, are capable of being moſt uſeful and beneficent to Society, if their Actions are ſuitable to their Profeſſions. All the World will acknowledge and pay a willing Homage to their Merit, and there will be no need of demanding, much leſs of extorting Reſpect, or of Complaints and Exclamations for want of it. The Danger lies on the other Side; for there are ſuch Seeds of Superſtition in Humane Nature, that all our Prudence and Caution will be little enough to prevent even Adoration to their Perſons.

If, therefore, they want that Reſpect they are ſo fond of, they cannot be to ſeek for the true Reaſons, *viz.* their own Corruptions and Worthleſſneſs, which muſt be exceeding great to get the better of ſo many Advantages. When a certain late Dutcheſs was complaining to a Gentleman of more Wit than Complaiſance, that (in Spite of her great Quality and Revenue) ſhe was ſubject to continual Affronts; *Pray, Madam,* ſays he, *is not Mr. Goodman an excellent Actor?*

18 *The Independent Whig.*

If Clergymen would avoid Contempt, let them avoid the Causes of it. Let them not be starting and maintaining eternal Claims to worldly Power : Let them not be hunting after Honours, courting Preferments, and bustling for Riches : Let them not be assuming to give Models of Humane Government, or to adjust and determine the Titles of Princes : Let them not pretend to punish any Man for his Way of Worship, and to give him to the Devil for his Money or Opinion : Let them not join in Factions, and foment Rebellions : Let them not defy Heaven by swearing falsely : Let them not promote Servitude in the People, and Barbarity in the Prince ; and let them not flatter wicked Kings, and plague and disturb good Ones.

Let them win Respect and wear it ; but let them not earn Infamy and demand Veneration. Let not those of them, who gratify Brutish Appetites, and live in all Vileness, add Want of Shame to their Want of Grace, and bewail that they are contemned, while they are deserving it. If a Man pretending to great Gravity and Regard, should dress himself up in a Fool's Coat, and a Pair of Horns, would not People laugh at him in Spite of themselves ? And would not his Repentment and Rebukes add still to their Mirth ? A Clergyman who is Drunk on *Saturday*, will but, with an ill Grace, talk of his Dignity and Ambassadorship on *Sunday*. Ought we to own and Reverence that Man

as our Guide to Heaven, who is himself going a contrary Road, and rioting in those Vices which his whole Duty is to restrain?

The Honour therefore of the good Clergy is consulted and promoted by exposing the bad. A profane Priest is the Disgrace and Bane of his own Order, and they who stand by him, adopt his Infamy, and defile themselves. If he neglects God, and disturbs Humane Society, how do the Clergy suffer tho' he is whip'd or hang'd? His Punishment is their Credit and Security, because by it is lopped off from their Body, a gangrened Limb that incumbred and deformed the rest.

Atheists, who are not restrained by the Fear of God, which is stronger than all the Laws in the World, ought, in the Opinion of Politicians, as well as Casuists, to be expelled from the Society of Men: And shall more Mercy be shewn to those who are so hardened in Impiety, that tho' they believe a God, yet dread not his Vengeance, but swear by his great and terrible Name to an avowed Falshood? Or can the Clergy suffer by the Loss of such execrable Company?

An unfortunate *Levite*, some Years since, had his Head cleft by a Butcher, who caught him in Bed with his Wife; and neither the Number of Reverend Auditors, who attended the Tryal, a due Regard to the Cloth, or an Apprehension of the Carnage it might produce, could hinder the Judge from directing the Jury to call the Crime only *Man-*

20 *The Independent Whig.*

Slaughter ; which so provoked the meek Spirit, and Patience, of a Holy Brother, then present, that he cried out in the Court, *Hey Day! Here's a fine World! if these Things are suffered, there will be no living for us.*

No chaste or sober Clergyman could be terrify'd with such an Example, or think the Church in any Danger by it. Does any vertuous Member of the Holy Order suffer either in his Person or Character, if *Biss* diverts his Spectators in a Pillory, or Parson *Paul* his Auditors upon a Gallows? None can share in their Disgrace, but those who sympathize in their Crimes, or censure their Punishment. How much more honest, as well as prudent, would it be to remove the Guilt from themselves, by throwing it all upon the devoted Head; to put the evil Thing out of the City; and to imitate the Sagacity of the horned Herd, who always drive the blown Deer from amongst them, where he seeks his Refuge, tho' at the Hazard of involving the whole Tribe in his Misfortune!



NUMBER IV.

Wednesday, February 10. 1720.

Of the Explication of the Scripture.



O fear God, and keep his Commandments, is the Summary of the Old Testament; and to believe that Jesus Christ is come in the Flesh, is the Compendium of the New. Whoever can prove his Obedience and Faith, by these two plain Duties, fulfils the Law and the Gospel.

It was most agreeable to the infinite Goodness and tender Mercies of God, to make every Thing which he requires of us, weak Men, obvious and clear. The Importance of the Duty implies its Certainty, which is not to be found in Phrases either doubtful or obscure. The Scriptures are justly stiled the *Revealed Will* of God, and are address'd to *all* Mankind, and given to remain as a Rule of Faith and Manners to the End of the World. It must therefore follow, that whatever is necessary to be known in them, is to

22 *The Independent Whig.*

be as easy and intelligible at one Time as another, and to all Men alike.

Where their Meaning cannot be positively determined, a new Inspiration will be necessary to reduce them to Certainty ; and if that is wanting, every Thing else is but Conjecture. Whoever therefore goes about to put a Construction upon such Passages in Scripture, and enjoins us to believe his Interpretation, does not demand Submission to the Word of God, but to his own Authority and Imagination.

What Use is there of an unintelligible Proposition ? Or of a Revelation which wants to be revealed ? Almighty God will never require of us to see in the Dark, till he has given us new Eyes ; nor to believe any Article, or obey any Precept, till we understand him, and know what he means. A Rule which is not plain, is no Rule at all : Nor will he make a Law binding, or the Transgression of it a Sin, till we know what it is.

It is true, Humane Laws oblige all Men to submit to the Penalty annex'd to the Transgression, tho' many perhaps may never hear of them. But this is to prevent the constant Plea of Ignorance, which otherwise would be made by all Offenders. The Corruption and Imbecility of Humane Nature make this Proceedure necessary. But it is far otherwise in the Dispensation of Providence. The Author of it sees our Hearts, penetrates the most secret Recesses of our Souls, makes indulgent

dulgent Allowances for our Weaknesses, and expects nothing from us, but what he has given us the Means and Abilities of knowing and performing. He requires us not to make Brick without Straw. He judges by the Intention, not the Action. We cannot offend him but voluntarily, much less offer him an Affront, when we design Respect and Obedience.

The Creator and Preserver of Mankind cannot take Delight in puzzling his Creatures with Darkeness and Ambiguities, and in Points too where their Souls are in Danger. He is not a rigid Master, who would reap where he did not sow. This would be a cruel Mockery, unworthy of the Divine Being, *Who has brought Life and Immortality to Light.*

Nothing is plainer than the Law and the Gospel. Whoever says the contrary, does no less than accuse the great and good God, and justify wicked and wilful Men, whom he has left without Excuse, by telling them clearly what he expects from them. *What does God require of thee, O Man, but to do Justice, to love Mercy, and to walk Humbly?* said One of his Prophets out of his Mouth. I am very sure there is no Difficulty in understanding this.

The obscure Passages in Scripture could not be intended for our Instruction. Infinite Wisdom has hid them from our Eyes, to be brought to Light in his own Time, and then

24 *The Independent Whig.*

to answer the Ends of his Providence ; or perhaps to baffle our vain Pride and Curiosity. Who' art thou, O Man, who wilt be wiser than the Omniscient, who wilt make those Things necessary which he has not made so, wilt discover what he has thought fit to conceal, and know his Secrets whether he will or no ? This would be to mend the Scripture ; to make it more useful than God has made it ; to help the Holy Ghost, and to teach the Almighty how to express himself.

How absurd would it be to send Cook-Maids and Day-Labourers to study *Aristotle* and *Suarez* ; to rake into the Jargon of the Schools ; to learn all Languages, examine all Systems ; and to discover of themselves all Errors, Interpolations and Mistakes, or to do what is much more ridiculous, *that is*, wholly throw themselves and their Salvation, in most Countries, upon a Confederacy of Men, who have an Interest to deceive and oppress them, and ever did so when they had an Opportunity ; who have been always at Variance with one another, and with themselves ; and have agreed in nothing but the misleading of those who trusted them ! And yet One of these must be the unhappy Circumstance of the greatest Part of Mankind, if what I have said before is not true ; which we may be sure the Divine Goodness cannot permit.

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Nothing is more evident from History, than that most, if not all, the Improvements and Reformations of Religion have been made, not only without, but in Opposition to these Men. There have been near a Million of them kept in constant Pay for the best Part of Seventeen Hundred Years, to teach the World by their Precepts, and reform it by their Example; and yet I am persuaded they will not pretend that Religion is plainer, the Scriptures better understood, or that Mankind are more wise or virtuous for all their Instructions. So little have we been benefited by their Labours, and for all the Money they have received! I wish I could not say that the World has gradually decreas'd in Piety and Virtue, as these its Teachers have advanced in Riches and Power. It is owned by the best of themselves.

It is the farthest from my Thoughts, by any Thing I have before said, to undervalue their true Office, much less to make it useless. I sincerely think it absolutely necessary to the Peace and Happiness of Society. The *Roman* Consuls had an Officer attending their Triumphal Chariots, whose Business it was to cry out *Memento mori*.

I would have these too, answer the same End of their Institution; to press the Reading of the Scripture upon their Hearers; to shew their Excellency and Advantages; to inculcate the *plain Precepts* of Faith and Morality contained in them; and to demonstrate
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26 *The Independent Whig.*

the Goodness of God to Men, by proving that he has laid down to us, in plain Words, every Duty which he requires of us, either to himself, our Neighbour, or our selves. But let them not distract, instead of instructing, and confound ignorant People with Metaphysical Subtilties, which the Wisest cannot comprehend. Let them not strain ridiculous and selfish Consequences from obscure Parts of Scripture, and make the Almighty mean what he never said.

Let them give us God's Will in God's Words.

Another End of their Office is to execute those Duties of our most Holy Religion, which the Word of God has left at large for every one to do, but which indeed are necessary to be perform'd by single Persons in the several Churches or Societies of Christians; such as reading the Scriptures and publick Prayers aloud to the Congregation, and administering the Sacraments: What by the Gospel Liberty is the Right of every one (as shall be unanswerably made out hereafter) is by the Consent of Voluntary and National Churches become the Duty and Business of particular Persons, who are set aside and paid for that Purpose.


In what I have before said, I have the Concurrence of the best and wisest of our own Clergy, who acknowledge and contend that we are not to take the Almighty's Meaning

ing at second Hand, nor receive that for his Will which we our selves do not find to be so; but that we are to enquire before we believe, and to be convinced before we assent; every Assertion or Proposition, before it is examin'd, being alike to the Understanding, as every Colour is to the Blind: They own that our Judgment ought to be at no Man's Service, nor our Minds controuled in religious Matters, but by God alone; for as no Man's Soul can be saved by Proxy, so no Man ought to exercise his Faith by Proxy.

N U M B E R V.

Wednesday, February 17. 1720.

The Unfitness of the Clergy to Teach Others.

 S in my last Paper, I hope, I have fully shewn that Clergymen have no Right to interpret the Scriptures for other People; so I shall endeavour in this, to prove that they are the least qualify'd, for the most Part, to do so, of any
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28 *The Independent Whig.*

Set or Society of Men, in their present State of Learning and Virtue. This I do with a sincere Design to serve Them, as well as the Laity; hoping that when they see from what Source the Neglect and Contempt, which they so much complain of, proceed, they will join heartily in their own Reformation, in answering the Ends of their Institution, and in being hereafter as useful to their Country, as many of them have been formerly mischievous.

Use makes every Posture familiar to the Body, and every Opinion to the Mind. We are told that the *Brahmans*, in *India*, do, by long Habit, so distort their Limbs, that they grow in the Situation which they are put in. Every Day's Experience proves that we assimilate with the Company we keep, as well in our Sentiments, as in the Aire and Mein of our Bodies. Not only different Nations, but often Sects, Professions, and Trades, are to be known by their Phiz and Behaviour. A Sailor, or a Taylor, (to say nothing of their Betters) may be found out, however they disguise themselves.

Nothing but keeping the best Company can give a free and easy Carriage; and an open and generous Conversation alone can disengage our Minds from the strong Impressions of our Early Education. The Habit of thinking freely, and of expressing freely those Thoughts on all Occasions, enables us to judge well of Men and Things. Our Minds
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are polished by Collision, and a liberal Conversation not only starts all Difficulties, but solves them; if they are to be solved.

Almighty God give us Faculties to use them; and it is Ingratitude, as well as Folly, to return the Gift upon his Hands. Truth can never suffer by an impartial Examination, but on the contrary will receive Strength and Advantage from it. It is Error and Imposture alone, which dread a fair Enquiry, as being conscious of their own Weakness.

I think I may therefore safely affirm, that whatever Body or Society of Men are most restrained by themselves or others, from Reasoning freely on every Subject, and especially on the most important of all, are the least qualify'd to be the Guides and Directors of Mankind.

I will now examine how far this is the Circumstance of the Clergy in most Countries. They are no sooner discharged from the Nurse and the Mother, but they are delivered over to Spiritual Pædagogues, who have seldom the Capacity, and never the Honesty and Courage, to venture at a *Free Thought* themselves, and must consequently be improper Channels to convey any to their Pupils.

From thence they are sent to the Universities (very commonly upon Charity) where they are hamstringed and manacled with early *Oaths* and *Subscriptions*, and obliged to swear to Notions before they know what they

30 *The Independent Whig.*

they are. Their Business afterwards is not to find out what is Truth, but to defend the received System, and to maintain those Doctrines which are to maintain them. Not only their present Revenues and Subsistence, but all their Expectations are annexed to certain Opinions, established for the most Part by Popes and Synods, in corrupt and ignorant Ages, and even then often carried by Faction and Bribery, in Concert with the Designs and Intrigues of Statesmen ; but are sanctify'd by Time, and are now to be received without Enquiry.

No one can fairly examine what is Truth, who has an Interest on either Side of the Question. We are bribed by our Inclinations, in Spite of our best Resolutions. Who can be heartily angry at an Opinion, which will keep a Coach and Six, or strenuously endeavour to find out any Heresy in it? Besides, all Men are fond of Respect and Homage, and when they are in Possession, will esteem it but an unprofitable Study to find out that they do not deserve them.

As Clergymen so educated cannot, for the Reasons aforesaid, be fair and impartial Judges themselves of what is Truth, so their Authority can give but little Weight to such Doctrines as they may think fit to teach to others, The first Question ask'd of a suspected Witness in every Court of Judicature is, Whether he gets or loses by the Success of the Cause? And, if either appears, he is
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constantly set aside, and not trusted with an Oath.

It is demonstrable in Reason, that every Man's Pretences ought to be try'd by the same Test and Rule; and where the Evidence of a Proposition cannot be clearly shewn by one who has an Interest to advance it, nor proved by Miracles, all other Persons have Reason to suspect it of Imposture: When what he offers will indisputably conduce to his own Benefit, and I have only his Word that it will conduce to mine, I cannot doubt but his Kindness is greater for himself than for me, and shall consequently believe that he is not doing my Business, but his own.

The Apostles, and some of the first Christians, did not so teach Christ. They not only convinced Mankind of the Truth of what they said by Miracles; but made it apparent to all the World, that they sought no Temporal Benefit; but, on the contrary, left their Families, their Professions, and all the Comforts of Life, to wander about the Earth, and preach a Doctrine infinitely advantageous to the present, as well as eternal State of others; and expected no Reward to themselves in this Life, but Beggary, Stripes, and even Death it self.

It is not to be wondered that no Discourses, or even distant Hints, are countenanced or permitted in Universities Abroad, which have the least Tendency to oppose the Pride or Temporal Grandeur of the Clergy; nor
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32 *The Independent Whig.*

any Speculations suffered to be vented there, which ever so little break in upon received Opinions. It is not only a certain Stop, to all Hopes of Preferment, to question the Truth of any of their darling Notions; but you are in Danger of being expelled, and are sure to be discountenanced and contemned.

The Philosophy and Learning there taught, and encouraged, are exactly calculated and adapted to this State of Darkeness and Ignorance: They are nothing but an unintelligible Jargon of undefined Words and bare Sounds, which mean nothing, and yet can prove every Thing. With this Gibberish they are diverted from sound Knowledge, by being put upon a wrong Scent; and are hindered from attaining true Wisdom, by believing that they have got it.

All Attempts towards useful Learning are neglected and discouraged; and nothing is found out to be true in Philosophy, but is made false in Religion; and the Authors and Discoverers are branded with Heresy, if not Atheism: of which the Examples are infinite.

Thus accoutred, and thus set out, our young Ecclesiastick commences Governour and Director of Mens Consciences. He is impatient of the least Contradiction, and is all in a Flame at an Opposition which he has not been used to. As he never questioned the Truth of any his own Notions himself, he grows outrageous at any one else who
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does, and immediately cries out aloud for Fire and Faggot.

To this it is owing that the Difference between the controversial Writings of Gentlemen, and those of Divines, is so very remarkable. The first are carried on for the most Part with Humanity, and always with good Manners, even when the Matter is most poignant and sarcastical. In the Latter, at first Sight, appears the *Odium Theologorum*; and Rage, Ill-breeding, and Revenge, breathe thro' every Part of them. A proper Disposition this to make Converts, and govern the World!

This Temper has (even in *England*) shewn it self visibly, in their Treatment of a modern Bishop, whom neither his great Penetration, his pious Life, nor the pretended Regard to his pastoral Function, could protect from Ecclesiastical Hatred and Fury, for his having dared to engage in the Interest of Mankind.

As it is undeniably true, that what I have before described is the unhappy Circumstance of the Clergy, in most Countries; so no Man, who has the least Desire to promote useful Knowledge, true Virtue, and sound Religion amongst Mankind, but must endeavour to manumit them from this State of Servitude and Darkness, even tho' they should oppose it themselves. Birds and Beasts used to Lodges or Dens, are afraid to go out of them; and even Men long shut up in

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34 *The Independent Whig.*

dark Dungeons, cannot for some Time bear the Light of the Day: Galley Slaves not knowing what to do with Liberty given them, have often, of their own accord, return'd to their Chains; nay, God's own People themselves longed again for *Egyptian* Flesh-pots, and *Egyptian* Slavery, when they were fed with Food from Heaven; notwithstanding which, *Moses* would not gratify their brutish Appetites, but made them Happy in Spite of themselves.


I would therefore have every Clergyman enjoy the full Liberty which every Layman enjoys. *We* are not confined in our Searches after Truth; and why should the Clergy be confined, in whose Hands it is more powerful and advantageous than in ours? The granting of *Ecclesiastical Freedom* to Churchmen is as equitable as that of *Civil Freedom* to Laymen. I thank God, *We* possess a glorious Portion of the latter; and I heartily wish *Them* an equal Portion of the former.



NUMBER VI.

Wednesday, February 24. 1720.

Of Creeds and Confessions of Faith.

 Have shewn in my Fourth Paper, the Boldness and Absurdity of the Exposition of Holy Scripture, when that Exposition is maintained and imposed for Canonical Truth. I shall here prosecute the same Subject merely as it relates to *Creeds and Confessions of Faith*.

In our Disputes with the Church of *Rome*, we contend that the Scripture alone is a sufficient Rule of Faith and Practice; and our Divines have proved it unanswerably. But when our High Church Priests argue with Dissenters, and those whom they are pleased to christen Hereticks, Holy Writ is not so highly complemented: It is then very subject to lead us into Mistakes, and hard to be understood. It is true 'tis infallible, and was given us from Heaven to *be a Light unto our Feet, and a Lamp unto our Paths*; but still it is dark and

36 *The Independent Whig.*

insufficient without *Human Aid and Explanation*. For, though it be exceeding plain to us of the Established Church of *England*, and proves us to be in the Right in every Article, Ceremony and Habit whatsoever; yet it is utterly hid from those who will not accept of *our* Guidance, and submit to *our* Authority. And therefore if they refuse to believe and obey our *Supplements* and *Improvements* of the Bible, and to accept of the Salvation, which is to be had in our Church, and the Church of *Rome*, they shall have no Salvation at all. It is fit and Orthodox that Men should perish for follow their Consciences, and for understanding the Scripture without the Leave of the Ordinary.

Thus when they debate with the Papists, they praise the Scriptures, inveigh against the imposing of Opinions, and speak in the Stile of Dissenters. But when they are pleased to rebuke Non conformists, they borrow the Language of Papists, and urge the Authority of our Apostolick Church, and her divine Right to judge for others; and deal hard Language and worse Usage to all that take the same Privilege which they do. There is, however, this small Difference between us Conformists and the Schismatics; We have good pay for being Orthodox, and the Separatist pays dear for being in the Wrong. If these are not two good Reasons for delivering him over to Satan, I despair of finding better.

In Consequence of this Power in High-Churchmen to be the Mouthsmen of the Bible, which if we take their Word cannot speak for it self, they claim a Right to make *Creeds* for others: And this is what I am now to examine.

I think it but Justice to the Goodness of God to affirm, that Belief or Disbelief can neither be a Virtue or a Crime in any One, who uses the best Means in his Power of being informed. If a Proposition is evident, we cannot avoid believing it; and where is the Merit or Piety of a necessary Assent? If it is not evident, we cannot help rejecting it, or doubting of it; and where is the Crime of not performing Impossibilities, or not believing what does not appear to us to be true? Are Men who have good Eyes, the more righteous for seeing? Or do they offend in seeing too well? Or do blind Men sin, in not distinguishing Colours?

When we clearly see the Connexion of a Proposition, or know that we have God's Word for it, our Assent is inevitable. But if we neither comprehend it our selves, nor see God's Authority for it, and yet swallow it, this is *Credulity*, and not *divine Faith*, which can have nothing less than *divine Truth* for its Object. When we are sure that God Almighty speaks to us, we readily believe him who cannot lie, nor be mistaken, nor deceive us: But when Men speak, though from God himself, our Belief in them is but human Con-

38 *The Independent Whig.*

fidence, if we have only their own Authority that they had it from God: Their being Bishops, their being learned, their meeting together in Synods; all this alters not the Case: We can judge of their Opinions no otherwise than as of the Opinions of Men, and of their Decisions, but as of human Decisions.

When the Articles of any *Creed* appear to be contained in Scripture, whoever believes *that*, does in Consequence believe *them*; and then such Creed is unnecessary: But when we cannot, or think we cannot, find them in Scripture, and yet give equal Credit to them, we depreciate and profane the divine Authority it self, by accepting the Words of Man's Invention as wiser and more significant than the Words of God's own choosing.

We are sure that the Scripture Phrases were inspired by the Holy Ghost, and as sure that our own Forms and Injunctions are Human, and framed by Priests. It is therefore strange, that the former should be insufficient and unintelligible, and the latter infallible, and to be embraced and obey'd on the pain of Damnation; and that the Priests must do what God Almighty has, without Success, endeavoured to do.

Besides, as the Imposition of human Creeds is contrary to Reason, so is it also to Charity. They were generally made in a Passion, not to edify, but to plague those for whom, or rather against whom they were intended. They were the Engines of Wrath and Vengeance,

geance, nor could they serve any other Purpose. Those who believed them already, did not want them; and those who disbelieved them, were not the better for them. But this was not the worst of it; for they who did not receive them against their Conscience, were curs'd; and they who did, deserved it. So that either the Wrath of God on one Hand, or the Wrath and Cruelty of the Clergy on the other, was unavoidable. If People said they believed, and did not, they mocked God and shipwrecked their Souls; and if they did not believe and owned it, though they saved their Souls, they provoked their Reverend Fathers, and were destroyed.

Whenever these Dictators in Faith had a Mind to be mischievous, and to undo one who gave them signal Offence, either by his good Reputation, or good Bishoprick, they began his Ruin by their great Care for his Soul; and so invented a Creed for him, which ruined him effectually, by giving him, as they said, to Satan, but, in Truth, to Beggary, Stripes, or Flames. He therefore who had any Virtue or Religion, was a certain Sufferer by these Systems of Faith, which were contrived for that Purpose. The Man that had no Conscience nor Honesty, was not worthy of their Anger; or, which is most likely, was on the Orthodox side, or at least quickly became a Convert to it, being, like themselves, able to swallow any Thing.

40 *The Independent Whig.*

So that Creeds, as they were the Result of Revenge, Pride, or Avarice, so were they the constant Preludes and Introductions to Ignorance, Cruelty and Blood; and the wretched Laity were craftily, as well as inhumanly, made the deluded and unnatural Instruments of Butchering one another, to prove the Infallibility of the Faith-Makers; who, while they were wantonly shedding Christian Blood, and dooming to Damnation those who called upon the Name of the true God, had the shameless Assurance to miscall themselves the Ambassadors of the meek Jesus.

And indeed, what better could be expected from Men so chosen, so unqualify'd, and so interested, as the Members of these general Creed-making Councils for the most Part were? They were chosen from several Parts by a Majority of Votes; and they who were most aspiring, factious or crafty, carried it: They sprung from the meanest of the People: They were bred in Cells: They popped into the World without Experience or Breeding: They knew little of Mankind, and less of Government, and had not the common Qualifications of Gentlemen: They were governed by Passion, and led by Expectation: And, either eager for Preferment, or impatient of missing it, they were the perpetual Flatterers, or Disturbers of Princes.

These were the Men, this their Character. When these Reverend Fathers were got together in a Body, by the Order of a Prince or

a Pope; who, having his Necessities, or the Ends of his Ambition to serve, chose proper Tools for those Purposes; they were directed to form such Creeds and Systems of Faith, as his present Views or Interests made requisite for Mankind to believe.

In this new Employment every Member, we may be sure, was forward to shew his Talents in starting new Tenets, or in contradicting those already started, and so to make himself considerable enough for that Preferment which he was resolved to earn one way or another. And this being the great Aim of them all, Jealousies and hard Words were carried to the most violent Pitch. There was no End of their Wrangling and Reviling. Not content to abuse each other by Word of Mouth, they sometimes scolded in Writing; and every Reverend Father drew up a bitter *Billingsgate* Petition against another Reverend Father. Sometimes, not satisfied with Vollies of Scurrility, unheard of in Assemblies of Gentlemen, they had Recourse to Club-Law, and made good their Inventions and Distinctions with Blows and Blood. And if the Truth could not be found out by Scolding, Contradiction, and Battle, it was not found out at all.

Thus any Emperor or Pope might have what Creed he pleased, provided he would be at the Pains and Price of it. And for the rest of Mankind, they had this short Choice, *To comply*, or be undone.

NUMBER VII.

*Wednesday, March 2. 1720.**Of Uninterrupted Succession.*

SINCE all the most idle and visionary Pretences of the Popish and popishly affected Clergy, have their Ends, and their Danger, and therefore should be narrowly watched, and vigorously opposed; I shall in this Paper enquire into the Validity of a principal Claim of theirs, I mean that of *Uninterrupted Succession*; and endeavour to find whether there is any Foundation to support this Corner-stone of their Authority, except in their own wild Imaginations.

One might reasonably imagine, that a Doctrine of so much Importance to the temporal and eternal State of all Mankind, should be expressly laid down, and fully explained in the Holy Scriptures, to prevent all Possibility of Mistake about it. But, instead of this, the Word, as far as I remember, is not once mentioned

tioned there, nor any other Word equivalent to it; so that we are under a Necessity of recurring to the Clergy themselves for Information: And here too we are as much bewildered as before; for some of them boldly assert it, and others flatly deny it.

Besides, those who hate and damn one another, claim it equally to themselves, and deny it to all others. Those who are Successors to the Apostles in *England*, disown their Brother Successors beyond the *Tweed* and about the *Lake*; and they their Brother Successors at *Rome*; and they theirs at *Greece* and *Armenia*, as well as every where else. Now all these, who so confidently assume the Successorship to themselves alone, are as opposite to each other in Sentiments and Worship as Light is to Darkeness. They cannot therefore all have it; and if only one has it, how shall we know who he is? No Man's Testimony ought to be taken in his own Case; and, if we take that of other People, there are twenty to one against them all.

If the Clergy of the Church of *England*, as by Law established, are, of all the Reformed, supposed to enjoy this Line of Entail entire to themselves; pray, how came they by it? Not from the *Reformation*, which began not till near fifteen Centuries after the Apostles were dead; and *Cranmer* owned Ordination *then* to be no more than a Civil Appointment to an Ecclesiastical Office. It is certain, at that Time this *Utopian* Succession

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44 *The Independent Whig.*

sion was not so much as thought of by any who embraced the Protestant Religion. At present, indeed, and for a good while past, the Jacobite High Clergy contend for it with equal Modesty and Truth. But, in Order to adopt it, they are forced to drop the *Reformation*; for,

You must know, courteous Reader, that this same Succession is now deduced from *Rome*, and the Pope has had the keeping of it; who, by all that adhered to the Reformation, was held to be *Antichrist*, and the *Man of Sin*. He was often an Atheist, often an Adulterer, often a Murtherer, and always an Usurper; and his Church has constantly lived in gross Idolatry, and subsisted by Ignorance, Frauds, Rapine, Cruelty, and all the blackest Vices. It is certain, she was full of Wickedness and Abomination, and void of all Goodness and Virtue, but that of having kept the Apostolick Orders pure and undefiled for our modern High-Churchmen.

However, I think they themselves seem to be now sensible, that it will be a difficult Matter to make out, this Way, their Kindred to the Apostles, without being nearer akin to Popery; they are therefore forced to own the Church of *Rome* to be a *true Church*. But, I would beg Leave to observe here, that as there is no conversing here with a Chimney-sweeper without catching some of his Soot; so we ought not to be surprized if, in succeeding to the Orders of that Church, they

they also succeed to most of her good Qualities, and if the Liquor smells strongly of the Cask. I confess, amongst us Laymen, it would look a little absurd, if any one should gravely assert, that, ‘ indeed *Lais* was a filthy Strumpet, and no virtuous Woman could converse with her; but, for all that, ‘ she was a *true Virgin*, and *all Chastity* was ‘ deriv’d from her!

But such Absurdities as these go for nothing amongst some Sorts of Ecclesiasticks. We will therefore, in the next Place, enquire what it is which they would succeed to. The Apostles had no Ambition, Jurisdiction, Dignities, or Revenues; to which they could be Successors. We read not in Scripture one Word of Ecclesiastical Princes, Popes, Patriarchs, Primates, &c. On the contrary, our Saviour himself declares, that *his Kingdom is not of this World*; and when the young Man in the Gospel (St. *Matth.* Ch. 19th) asked of him, *What he should do to obtain eternal Life*? He answer’d, that, besides keeping the Commandments, he should *sell all that he had, and give it to the Poor*. N. B. He did not bid him give a Penny to the Priests.

In the 20th Chap. of the same Gospel, our Saviour takes Notice to his Disciples, that the *Princes of this World exercise Dominion over them*; but, says he, *it shall not be so amongst YOU*; but *whoever will be great amongst you, let him be your Minister*; and *whoever will be Chief, let him be your Servant*.

Nay,

46 *The Independent Whig.*

Nay, he says that even the *Son of Man* came *not to be ministred unto, but to minister*. In the 23d Chap. he condemns the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, for loving the *uppermost Rooms*, and the *chief Seats* in the *Synagogue*; and their desiring to be called of Men, *Rabbi*; and he forbids all this *Pride* to his *Disciples* as well as his other *Hearers*; and orders them not to call one another *Master*; for one, says he, is *your Master, even Christ, and he that is greatest among you shall be your Servant*. Nor do I find that, while he was upon Earth, he laid Claim to any Power but *to do the Will of him that sent him*. Indeed, after his Resurrection, he tells his *Disciples* that *all Power is given to him in Heaven and in Earth*; and he bids them teach it to all Nations, and baptize them in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; but he does not give them the least Power, or Dominion, of any Kind whatsoever.

And it is plain that his *Disciples* understood him so. *St. Paul* tells the *Corinthians*, in his 2d Epistle to them, Chap. 1. that they had not *Dominion over their Faith*, but were *Helpers of their Joy*. In the fourth Chap. of the same Epistle, he tells them, that *they preach not themselves, but Christ Jesus their Lord, and themselves THEIR Servants for Jesus sake*. In the first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, Chap. 3. he admonishes them *not to glory in Men*, no not in himself, nor *Apollos*, nor *Cephas*; and tells the People, that even the

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the Apostles themselves, and all Things are THEIRS, and they are Christ's, *and Christ is God's*. In the 9th Chap. he tells them, that tho' he is free from all Men, yet he has made himself SERVANT unto all, that he might gain the more. St. Peter also, in his first Epistle, Chap. 5. exhorts the Elders to *feed the Flock of Christ*, and to take the Oversight thereof, not by *Constraint*, but *willingly*; not for *filthy Lucre*, but of a *ready Mind*; neither as being LORDS *over God's Heritage*, but as being *Examples to the Flock*.

Now either these Elders were Clergymen, or they were not: If they were Clergymen, their pretended Successors may see upon what Terms they are to be *Feeders*, and *Overseers* of the *Flock of Christ*: But, if they were only Laymen, then it is plain that no other Qualifications were necessary to a *Spiritual Shepherd*, than a willing, disinterested, and humble Mind; and all Subjection is, in the 5th Verse, commanded to be reciprocal—*Likewise, ye Younger, submit your selves to the Elders: Yea, all of you be subject to one another, and be cloathed with Humility; for God resisteth the Proud, and giveth Grace to the Humble*.

For my self, I confess that I am not Master enough of any Language to find Words more expressive, or which can more fully renounce all Sorts of Jurisdiction and Dominion, than those in the Passages which I have here quoted: And nothing can be more
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48 *The Independent Whig.*

ridiculous, as well as impious, than to oppose them with equivocal, doubtful, and figurative Expressions. If the Popish Priests could but find out one such clear Text on their Side, how would they gallop away on the Ridge of it, till they had rode themselves out of Breath, and the Laity out of their Senses, and their Estates !

As I have made it fully appear, that the Apostles understood our Saviour in this Sense ; so it is evident, that the first Christians had not the least Apprehension that the Apostles claimed any Power or Authority to themselves. They were poor Men, of mean and mechanical Professions, who left Fathers, Mothers, Children, Families, Trades, and renounced all the good Things of this World, to wander about it, and preach Christ. Their Disinterestedness and Sufferings were powerful Arguments of the Truth of their Doctrines : Whereas, if they had told their Hearers, in the modern High-Church Strain, that “ as soon as they became our Converts, they “ became also their *Spiritual Subjects* ; That “ they themselves were *Ecclesiastical Princes* ; and that *Spiritual Government was as much more Excellent than the Civil, as Heaven was than Earth, yea much more so ; That the Episcopal Honour, and sublime Dignity, could not be equalled by the Glory of Kings, and the Diadems of Princes ; That Kings and Queens ought to bow down to the Priests with their Face towards the Earth, and lick up the Dust of their Feet* — with whole
 Volumes

Volumes more of such blasphemous Trash, as is vended by Dr. *Hicks*, Mr. *Leslie*, and indeed by almost all the High-Church Writers; and yet not publickly disapproved, or censured by the *Convocation*, or any *Body* of the Clergy, tho' they have shewn an outrageous Enmity to all who have asserted the contrary Principles. If the Apostles had told them too, that they themselves had a Right, not only to the Tenth Part of their Estates, but of their Labour, and that since *they* (their Hearers) *administered so many Things to a King, who administers Peace and War for Bodily Safety; how ought they not to administer more liberally to him, who administers the Priesthood towards God, and secures both Body and Soul by his Prayers?*

I say, if any of this Choice Fustian had been broach'd to the World, at the first Opening of the Gospel, what Progress could Christianity have made? How could the Apostles have been disinterested Witnesses of the Truth of the Doctrines, which gave them such Jurisdiction, Dominion and Riches? And how justly would the Princes and Powers of the Earth have punished such Usurpations upon their Civil and Ecclesiastical Authority?

The Silence alone of the Enemies to Christianity, is a sufficient Confutation of this wicked and black Calumny, cast upon them by their pretended Successors; but which their bitterest Opposers had more Modesty than to charge them with, tho' they ran-

hack'd Earth and Hell for all other Sorts of Scandal.

N U M B E R V I I I .

Wednesday, March 9. 1720.

Of Uninterrupted Succession. Part 2.



R. Tillotson, in his Sermon against *Transubstantiation*, tells us, that “it might well seem, strange if any Man should write a Book to prove that an Egg is not an Elephant, and that a Musquet Bullet is not a Pike.” He might have added, that this was the hard Circumstance the Laity were reduced to in their Disputes about Religion with most Sets of Ecclesiasticks; and, what is still worse, when they had proved these Things, they were never the better.

The greatest Part of Mankind have learned to judge of Religious Matters, by other Faculties and Senses than those which God Almighty has given them. The first Thing they are taught is, that Reason may be on

one Side of the Question, and Truth on the other; which Maxim being well establish'd, there will be an End of all Reasoning ever after; and there can be no Criterion between Truth and Falshood: But those, who, by Education and Custom, have once got Possession of their Superstition and Fears, may impose upon them what crafty and advantageous Doctrines they please.

By these Means the Christian Religion, most easy and intelligible in it self, and adapted to the meanest Capacities, is become, in most Countries, a Metaphysical Science, made up of useless Subtilties, and insignificant Distinctions; calculated to gratify the Pride of Corrupt Clergymen, by making them admired and revered by the People, for their profound Knowledge and deep Learning; and consequently Religion is wholly left to their Care and Conduct, as being infinitely above poor *Lay-Apprehensions*. And to this, the World is beholding for the Depravation of Virtue and Morality; and for all the Domination, Pomp and Riches of the Popish Priesthood.

Therefore, I hope no one will condemn an Undertaking intended to restore Christianity to its Primitive Innocence, and Native Simplicity; to oppose Common Sense against Pompous Nonsense, and Learned Absurdity; and to shew how, and in what Meaning, *The Kingdom of Heaven is said to be Revealed to Babes and Sucklings, and hid from the*

52 *The Independent Whig.*

Learned and Wise : That is to say, it is easily learned and known, by those who make Use of their Natural Faculties, and Uncorrupted Reason ; but will always be hid from such, who hunt after it in the Schools of the Philosophers, or in any ambitious and factious Assemblies and Synods of Popish Ecclesiasticks. I shall therefore endeavour to keep this plain and easy Subject clear of all vain Philosophy, and Metaphysical Gibberish, with which the Adversaries always attempt to entangle it ; as knowing well, that if they can but make it Unintelligible, their Authority alone will decide every Question in their own Favour.

As I conceive I have fully shewn, in my last Paper, that the Apostles claimed no Jurisdiction, Authority, or Coercive Power, of any Kind whatsoever, over their Hearers ; but only obey'd the Will of their Master, in delivering a Message from Heaven, for the infinite Benefit of Mankind ; and to prove their Mission, brought their Credentials, namely, *The Power of doing Miracles*, along with them : So I shall shew, that what Power they had, (except that which was miraculous, and died with them ;) or, to speak more properly, *what Right* they had to perform the Duties and Offices of Christianity, did not descend to one Christian more than another ; but that all were empowered alike to exercise alike the Functions of their most Holy Religion.

When a Command is given from God to Men, to do and perform any Action, it is not only the Right of every One, but it becomes his Duty, to execute it himself, when he is capable of doing it; unless the Precept directs some other Manner of Performance: And whoever asserts that it does, is oblig'd to prove it. And he must not be surprized, if in a Case of this great Consequence, we shall expect plain and direct Texts, describing the Extent of the Power demanded, and the Persons to whom it is given. It will not do his Business to pick up Two or Three scatter'd and disjointed Sentences, and putting them upon the Rack, torture them till they confess what they never meant, against the whole Current of Scripture. It must be laid down plainly and directly, and made obvious to the meanest Capacities; not depending upon the Criticisms of *Rabbinical* Learning; not sublimated from *Jewish* and *Heathen* Traditions; nor extorted from doubtful, equivocal, and unintelligible Expressions. It is not consistent with the Goodness of God, to suffer a Power, upon which the Being of Christianity, and the Temporal and Eternal Happiness of all the World depends, to remain in Obscurity and Darkness; and therefore we may be sure, that whatever of this Kind does so, is the Invention of ambitious and wicked Men, and not the Will of the great and good God.

54 *The Independent Whig.*

It will be incumbent on them to shew one clear and direct Text, where our Saviour confines the Administration of the Sacraments to any Set of Men whatsoever. The contrary of which is so evident, that there is not in Scripture one Instance where the Sacrament of our Lord's Supper was ever Administred by any One, who, in our Translation of the *New Testament*, is stiled *Bishop* or *Presbyter*. And it is as plain, that the Right of Baptizing belonged to all Christians equally. Both which, I shall make out unanswerably hereafter, in separate Papers. I shall also shew that the *Demagogon*, or boasted Power of Excommunication, is nothing else but a Liberty which every Man has over his own Actions, in conversing or mingling with what Society he pleases; or, at most, only a Precept or Exhortation, not to keep ill Company, and to remove such, or separate from them.

But to proceed with my Subject: If a Chain of Uninterrupted Succession had been necessary, an Uninterrupted Course of Talents, Grace and Abilities, superior to those of all other *Lay-Christians*, had been necessary also, to have made the Clergy resemble those whom they were to succeed in an Employment which required the Highest. But there is no such peculiar Genius or Virtue found amongst them. They are qualify'd by Means evidently Human for this Divine Calling. They are sent to Schools and Universities to learn.

learn to be Successors to the Apostles: (I will not say of them, what Mr. *Dodwell* says of the *Jewish* Priests, *that they make use of Wine, amongst other Bodily Helps, to obtain the prophetic Spirit*.) And all who have the same Sense and Opportunities, thrive at least as fast as those who are Candidates for the Priesthood; and might, if they pleased, apply their Learning to the same Uses. And as to Grace, Piety, and Humanity, I think verily the Modesty of the Clergy will not let them pretend to excel their Lay Neighbours in those Endowments.

The Apostles were inspired, had the Gift of working Miracles, could bestow the Holy Ghost, and had the Discernment of Spirits; and were consequently proper Judges of Mens Fitness for the Ministry, and could confer that Fitness. Our Modern Divines are not inspired, cannot work Miracles, nor give the Holy Ghost; nor can many of them even find out their own Spirit, so far are they from discerning that of other People.

The Apostles were a Set of extraordinary Persons, appointed by the Son of God to convert all Nations, and had extraordinary Endowments given them for that End. Their pretended Successors are a Race of very ordinary Men, possess'd of no extraordinary Abilities; sent by no Divine Authority; nor to Convert any Nation; but only take up a Trade to get a Livelihood.

Christ's Apostles were Pen-Men of the Holy Ghost, and writ Books of Scripture:

56 *The Independent Whig.*

But, pray, what New Gospel do our Modern Apostles give us? (I wish None of them had ever confounded the Old!) They are at best but Note-Makers and Commentators; in which Characters Laymen have succeeded as well, even by their own Acknowledgment.

Minellius and *Gronovius* have written Notes upon *Virgil* and *Livy*: Pray, are they Successors to *Virgil* and *Livy*, for that Reason? And are the stupid *Dutch* Commentators Successors to the great *Roman Orator*, because they have slept over his Works, and darkend them with Illustrations? Or is every One who sails to *America* for Gain, a Successor to *Christopher Columbus*, who discovered and pointed out the Way to the *New World*?

The great Business and Commission of the Apostles, was to Convert Mankind. Now, I would be glad to know how they can be succeeded in a Thing, which could be done but once; and in Countries, where it is already done: I mean, the Converting of a Nation, suppose *Greece*, *England*, or any other. What must the *Jews* have thought of a Set of hair-brained *Israelites*, who would have demanded of them vast Respect and Revenues, for succeeding *Moses* in redeeming them from Captivity to *Pharaoh*, and for leading them every Day of their Lives out of the Land of *Egypt*, Seventeen Hundred Years after they had left it? Or could any Number of *Jews* succeed *Nehemiah* in bringing back the Captive Tribes from *Persia*, and *Babylon*?

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Can any one succeed the Duke of *Marlborough*, in fighting the Battle of *Hochstedt*, and relieving the *German Empire*? I presume, every Foot-Soldier is not a Successor to *Alexander the Great*; nor every Serjeant of the Guards descended in a *Military Line* from *Julius Caesar*.

N. B. Having shewn that the Apostles have left no Successors, there is an End of the Question, Whether their No-Succession is Interrupted, or not? But my Respect to the High Clergy obliging me to give them all Advantages, I will, in some future Paper, admit that such a Succession had once a Being; and then will undeniably prove that it has been frequently, I may almost say constantly, interrupted and broken, under all those Heads which they make necessary to the Continuance of it.



NUMBER IX.

*Wednesday, March 16. 1720.**Of the Clearness of Scripture.*

Shall in this Paper endeavour to confirm what I have said in my last; by shewing, that God Almighty, in revealing his Will to Mankind, has always taken effectual Care that it could not be mistaken, and therefore made it so plain, as to need no farther Explanation, in all Things which are necessary for us to know.

When God would have his Pleasure known to Men, it is agreeable to his Goodness to make it evident; when he would not, it is agreeable to his Wisdom to make it impenetrable. Scripture was not given to make work for Interpreters; nor to teach Men how to doubt, but how to live. The Holy Spirit has made undeniably clear and manifest, all those Precepts which enjoin Faith and Obedience, which

which are the great Points of Religion; and weak Men cannot correct him, and do it better themselves.

I think it is generally granted, that Revelations are no more, and that Prophecy hath ceased. The Reason given for this, I take to be a very good one; namely, that God has already sufficiently discovered his Mind to Men, and made his Meaning manifest. If it were otherwise, we should doubtless have his extraordinary Presence still; but as we have not, it is to be presumed there is no Occasion. He appeared himself whilst Men were in Darkness; but now that he hath shewn them his *marvellous Light*, he appears no more. His Presence is supplied by his Word; which being addressed to all Men equally, and not to *one Tribe of Men* to interpret it for the rest, it follows, that all Men have in their Power the Means to understand it. *Old Revelation* therefore does not want the Assistance of *New*, nor has the Omnipotent any need of *Prolocutors*.

While God is delivering his Law to the World, he is plain even to Exactness; and his Orders are full and circumstantial even about the minutest Points. This is eminently proved by his Manner of giving Laws to the *Jews*. Every Ceremony, and every Instrument and Garment, used in their Worship, is precisely described and directed. The Trumpets, the Candlesticks, the Lamps, the Spoons, the Snuffers, are all of his own Appointment,
both

60 *The Independent Whig.*

both as to the Materials and the Use of them. He makes it impossible to mistake him. He calls the Priests by their Names, points out their Persons, and shews them every Branch of their Office. He limits and governs their Behaviour while they are about it; and does not leave it to *their* Wisdom to invent such Postures and Ceremonies, as *they* think fit to call *decent* and *significant*. They had not the Privilege to chuse their own Garments. *Moses*, who was the *Civil Magistrate*, had it in his Charge to *Sanctify* and *Consecrate* their Persons. Their Business in the Sacrifices, is pointed out to them: They are to put their Hands upon the Head of the Beast, and to receive its Blood, and to make Fires. They are not, as I remember, once made use of to speak God's Mind to his People; *that* is the Duty and Commission of the *Civil Magistrate*, and *Moses* performs it. They had not the least Hand in the Celebrating of the *Passover*, the *Jewish Sacrament*, to which ours of the *Lord's Supper* hath, it is said, succeeded: And as little were they employed in that other of *Circumcision*, the reputed Ancestor of *Baptism*. In short, their whole Function was to be *Servants* and *Journeymen* in the *House of Sacrifice*.

If Almighty God was thus punctual and particular in the Rituals and Outside of his Worship, can we imagine that he was defective or obscure, in declaring the more weighty Points of the Law? No — When our first
Parents

The Independent Whig. 61

Parents broke the Covenant, they did it wilfully, and could not pretend that they understood it not; *Of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou shalt not eat of it*, was all the Injunction that was laid upon them: And there was no need of a Commentator here. The Text might have been rendered more perplext, but not more plain.

The Covenant which he made with *Abraham* was not less clear. He was to *be the God of Abraham and of his Seed*; and every Male of his Race, and those that were bought with Money, were to be circumcised. There were no more Words to this Contract; and the Patriarch and his Issue had but one short System of Divinity, most intelligible of it self, and in no wise darkened with Glosses.

The Decalogue, or the Law of the Ten Commandments, delivered by God himself from *Mount Sinai*, with great Glory and astonishing Circumstances, was little else but the Law of Nature reduced into Tables, and expressed in Words of God's own chusing; and they were worthy of the Omnipotent and Infallible Author; for they were so plain and indisputable, that not a single Person of all the Twelve Tribes, so addicted on other Occasions to Contradiction and Wrangling, so much as pretended not to understand them: Nor was there one Man, much less a *Body of Men*, set apart to explain them.

62 *The Independent Whig.*

When God spoke to the *Jews* by his Prophets, the same Method of Clearness was observed. The Admonitions given, and the Judgments denounced, were adapted to the Capacity of every one concerned. The *Jews*, it is true, did not often believe them, at least not mind them; but it was never pleaded that they did not comprehend them. God inspired, and the Prophets spake, and all understood; but neither *Creeds* nor *Paraphrases* were made, for they were not necessary. At last, indeed the *Priests* and *Pharisees* made void the Word of God by their Traditions, and very rigidly tithing Mint and Cummin, neglected the greater Things of the Law, and taught for Doctrines the Commandments of Men. But we know what Thanks and Character they had for their Pains from the Saviour of the World, and what a terrible Doom he pronounced against them. Read the 23d Chapter of St. *Matthew's* Gospel, and see the Description of these vile Hypocrites, and then consider whether they be at this Day without Heirs and Successors. Indeed it seems to me to be the only Succession which has not been interrupted.

The Gospel, when it came, as it was to excel all other Laws, in its Ends and Usefulness, so was it the shortest and plainest Institution in the World. It only added the Duty of Faith to that of good Works, which was the great, if not the only, Business of the Moral Law. To believe that *Jesus Christ*

The Independent Whig. 63

was the only Son of God, was the great Principle of the Christian Religion. Nor was the Practice of this Belief attended with the least Difficulty, since our Saviour proved his Mission and Omnipotence, by Miracles that were undeniable and convincing. For the Truth of them he appealed to Men's Senses, and there was neither Mystery nor Jugling in his Actions, nor did they want any Body to explain them.

All this is further confirmed by the Conduct of the Apostles. The constant Drift and Tenour of their Lives and Preaching, was to persuade Mankind to believe in *Jesus Christ*. In order to which they worked Miracles, and gave the Holy Ghost. The Precept was thus short, and the Motives to comply with it, were thus irresistible. Hence it was, that sometimes Thousands were convinced in a Moment, without either *Commentaries*, or *Creeds*, or *Catechisms*. And indeed who could avoid believing a Proposition that proved it self?

The Apostles, when they had converted one City, did not stay to establish a Hierarchy there only, and to tell the *same Thing* over and over again to those that knew it already. No, — when they had planted the Faith in one Place, they travelled to another, and preached the Gospel to the unconverted World; leaving those already converted, to perform Christian Worship *their own Way*. If they believed in Christ, and lived soberly, the
Apostles

64 *The Independent Whig.*

Apostles desired no more. Those were the *Two Things, needful*; nor were they more needful than clear.

In this plain manner did God Almighty always discover himself and his Will, whenever he dispensed his Laws to the World. On the other Hand, while he hid himself from the Heathen World, did their Priests ever discover him? No, — they had Deities without Number; they worshipped Stocks and Stones, Trees, Rivers, Bulls, Serpents, Monkeys and Garlick. Both their Religion and their Gods were of the Priests making, and therefore we may be sure they were hopeful Ones. They created their Deities *after their own Likeness*; angry, cruel, covetous and lustful. Their Mysteries were full of Horror, Obsceneness, Craft and Delusion. The Will of their God was searched in the Guts and Ordures of dead Beasts, and a Coop of Chickens were his Privy Counsellors. His Favour or Displeasure depended upon their Crows; if they had puny Stomacks, the God was in a Fit of the Spleen; if Ravenous, he was in a giving Humour, and would grant you any Thing, even to the Cutting of the Throats of a whole Army, or Burning of a City, or Plundering a Province: And when he was tired of his Kindness to you, he would perhaps in a Day or Two, do all this for your Enemy.

Upon the whole, when Almighty God reveals his Will, he does it effectually; but
when

The Independent Whig. 65

when he disguises it in dark and doubtful Expressions, it is plain the Time of making himself *further* known to Men, is not yet come, and it is in vain for them to pry into his Secrets.

The all-merciful Being does never require of us, that which we cannot find he requires. It is not consistent with his Wisdom and Goodness, to make that necessary which he hath not made plain. He has with the greatest Perspicuity, described the Candlesticks, Tongs, and other *Tools* of Worship under the *Jewish* Law; and yet in the Gospel has not said one Word of some Doctrines, which we are told are necessary to Salvation. Altars and Priests are divinely appointed in the *Old Dispensation*, but are neither directed nor described in the *New*; and yet we know of what Importance they are at present in the *Popish Church* and *elsewhere*. The Priest's Office is particularized and circumscribed, even to the Killing of a Goat, or a Pair of Pigeons; and yet under the Gospel it is not so much as hinted, that a Priest shall administer either of the Sacraments; though, if we will take their own Words for it, there can be no Sacrament without them. In the *Levitical* Law, the *Sons of Levi* are expressly appointed to be Priests continually; but it is not once said in the Christian Law, that there must be an uninterrupted Race of Bishops, or Popes, or Priests, to the End of the World; and that there can be no Church where it

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66 *The Independent Whig.*

is not; tho', if this had been needful, it must have been particularized: So essential a Part of Christian Religion, and so absolutely necessary to every Man's Salvation, could never have been wholly omitted, or so much as left in Doubt.

As by the Law of *Moses*, the Priest's Office and Duty were minutely described, so their Maintenance was ascertained: But by the Law of Christ, there is not any Priesthood at all appointed, (as I shall fully make out hereafter) and consequently no certain Provision made for them. It is indeed said, that *The Labourer is worthy of his Hire*; and I acknowledge it is fit that those who hire them should pay them: But sure this Text leaves every one at Liberty to chuse his own *Labourer*, and to make as good a Bargain as he can, or to do his own Business himself. What Pretence is there of a Divine Right to just a Tenth Part; and not only of our Estates, but of our Stock and Industry too, which in some Corn Lands comes to Double the Rent that the Landlord receives?


The *Tribe of Levi* amongst the *Jews* were the Twelfth Tribe of *Israel*, and, in the Division of the Lands, had a Right to the Twelfth Share, without any Regard had to their Priestly Office; and consequently were allowed but a very small Proportion towards their *Hire*, and much less than, I doubt, their pretended Successors would be satisfy'd with. I would therefore, as a sincere

cere Friend to their Order, recommend to their Consideration, whether it would not be most adviseable, to quit their Divine Right, and be even content with the Laws of the Land.

N U M B E R X.

Wednesday, March 23. 1720.

Of Ordination.

 Take Honesty and Knowledge to be the Essential Talents requir'd for the Work of the Ministry: The One is acquired by Study, and the Other depends upon the Disposition of the Heart, or the Grace of God. Therefore he, who has a Capacity to Teach and Edify, has a Right to do Both.

Those who are Candidates for the Priesthood, carry their Qualifications along with them; and having passed Examination, receive a Power from the Bishop, which he receives from the Law, to put these Qualifications in Practice. But, if upon Trial, they

68 *The Independent Whig.*

are found insufficient, they are, or ought to be rejected.

A Physician does not receive from the College an Ability to practice; but only a Declaration that he already has it. Such a Declaration are *Holy Orders*: They convey nothing; neither Righteousness, nor Learning, nor Wisdom. They are only a Diploma or Privilege to exercise a certain Calling, during Good Behaviour. Any further than this, what signifies the Hand of a Bishop laid upon the Head of a Stripling, who seeks Promotion or a Livelihood? If that Hand puts any Thing into that Head, I would ask what it is, and how does it appear? What Alteration for the Better is to be found in the Person, or Endowments, or Spirit of the Party Ordained? How does it appear that he has any Moral Sufficiency which he had not before? Or any Spiritual Gift, besides that which he carries Home in his Pocket; and which was *confer'd* by the *Bishop's Secretary* for a *Fee*? Can there be any new Ability or Character without some Marks of it? Or is there an Alteration without a Change? It is an unconceivable Mystery to me, that the *same Man* should be *another Man*! I have known many a Man's Pride swell, and his Morals decay, after Orders; but very seldom his Manners or his Capacity enriched by them. He who has the Spirit, will do the Works of the Spirit: *By their Fruits ye shall know them.* The Thing, were it true, is very capable of Proof. indeed, it could not be hid nor disputed.

puted. On the contrary, when neither the Heart is mended, nor the Understanding enlightened, it is manifest that the Holy Ghost has nothing to do with either of them.

A Learned and Virtuous Layman can instruct more effectually, and pray more devoutly and successfully, than an ignorant and profane Priest; and is consequently a more proper and secure Guide to others. To say that he has no Call, is no more than to say that he has not *enter'd his Name*: Besides, it is false; for I will lay it down as a Proposition which I will abide by, that *He who has a Power to do Good, has a Call to do Good*; and the promoting of Virtue, and securing of Souls, is doing the greatest Good of all. St. James tells us, that *the effectual fervent Prayer of a Righteous Man availeth much*; but he does not say that he must be *in Orders*, or that he must perform the same in a consecrated Place: Tho' the Convocation, in the latter Part of the Queen's Reign, thought fit to differ with the Apostle in this Point.

Apollos, without any Call at all, but from his own Abilities, *being an Eloquent Man, and Mighty in the Scriptures*, and instructed in the Way of the Lord, and fervent in the Spirit, *spake and taught diligently the Things of the Lord, and boldly in the Synagogue*. It is plain he was not *Ordained*, unless it was by the Tent-Maker and his Wife, *Aquilla and Priscilla*: And that he had not the Holy Ghost, is also plain, for that he *knew only*

70 *The Independent Whig.*

the Baptism of John; and so they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the Way of God more perfectly. (Acts xviii. v. 24, &c.)

I doubt the Holy Ghost is too often made free with in Popish Countries, upon the Occasion of Young Mens taking Orders. I believe it will be found that their Motives are much more Temporal. It is consider'd as a secular Employment, as much as any other; and the Labour of a Clergyman is as evidently Bought and Sold, as that of an Attorney or any Tradesman. Besides, the Way to this Calling is easy and obvious: Where is the Difficulty of learning a little *Greek*, or chopping a little Logick, and of getting by Heart a few Questions in School-Divinity? Nay, there are many Ordained there, even without any of these momentous Accomplishments.

There are some who take the Orders of Clergymen, and yet never exercise the Function of Clergymen, either thro' Idleness, or Weakness. Does the Holy Ghost call Men to the Work of the Ministry, not to do the Work of the Ministry? Or does he call Men to an Office, without giving them Gifts and Grace to perform it? It was not so in the Apostles Days, when God inspired all whom he sent; and where the Divine Commission or Call was given, a *Door of Utterance* was also given. But there were then no *Sine Cures*, no great Revenues; no great Doctors, nor small Curates,

The Independent Whig. 71

It is evident, that neither the Church of *Rome* in general, nor any of its Bishops in particular, believe a Word of this pretended Call of the Holy Ghost, in the Business of taking Orders. For, by the Canons, the Person demanding Ordination, is to be examined as to his Capacity for the Ministry, and must produce a Certificate as to the Innocence and Morality of his Life; both which were unnecessary, if there was any Proof or Assurance of his Call from God. And the Questions asked him upon that Occasion, are such as demand no more than ordinary Human Aid to answer them. Nor is it at all expected of him that the Goodness of his Life should exceed that of other Laymen: If it is as good, it is well.

Whenever the Holy Ghost was given, it was given upon some extraordinary Occasion, for the doing of some extraordinary Action; as it was to the Apostles, for converting the Heathen World. *They* shewed the Power which they had, by the Wonders which they did; and gave effectual Evidences that they were divinely assisted. But some modern Priests, who have no extraordinary Work to do, assert, notwithstanding, that they have an extraordinary Call from the Spirit; which would also infer his extraordinary Assistance. But they say it without shewing it, and pretend to it without proving it. It is a Happiness that we are not obliged to take their Word; for tho' *Faith* it

72 *The Independent Whig.*

self be *the Evidence of Things not seen*, yet still it is the *Evidence*; that is, Proof must precede Belief.

When the Popish Clergy are charged with Frailties, Vices and Immoralities, they then confess the Truth, and are pleased to become Flesh and Blood as well as other Men, and subject to the like Infirmities and Passions; and if they said *greater*, we could readily believe them. But when a Point of Gain or Dominion is to be contended for, they grow all of a sudden more than Men; They are then the *Lord's Ambassadors, Successors to the Apostles, a Sacred Society*; and the Lord knows how many more fine Things. Now this Management is very unlucky for them, and full of palpable Contradiction; for if they had a greater Share of God's Grace and Spirit than others, it would be especially evident in the superior Piety of their Lives, since Holiness is shewn in Practice: Whereas the Spirit of this World manifests it self in the Love of Power and Wealth; and hence those who pursue them are called *Worldly Minded*, in Opposition to God's *Elect*, who are the *Spiritual Minded*. I need not recommend it to such Clergy, which to chuse, *Carnal Minds* with Riches and Authority, or *Heavenly Mindedness* without them. It is certain that the Apostles were *as pious as poor*.

If by the Call of the Holy Ghost, on this Occasion, be meant no more than a serious
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and devout Bent of Mind to administer in the Publick Worship of God, as some Reverend Divines, Lovers of Truth, do, I think, confess; then is the Claim of a Divine Mission and successive Right utterly at an End; and the taking of Orders is no more than taking a Licence to perform a religious Office, for which every religious intelligent Man is already qualify'd.

And indeed such a Man is, without the Consent of any Bishop, entitled to be a Pastor, in the Scripture Sense of the Word, tho' not to receive the *legal Wages* of a Pastor. He may preach and pray, and deliver the Sacrament, when Temporal Laws do not restrain him; but cannot take Tithes, which are annexed to certain Conditions and Opinions established by the State. As every State has its own Religion, so almost every Religion is directed and modelled by some State; and therefore they, who are Orthodox Conformists in one, are often Schismatical Dissenters in another. But such is the singular Modesty and Submission of the Clergy, that they, in most Countries, humbly acquiesce in the established Faith; and not only meekly accept of all the Ecclesiastical Power and Revenues to themselves, but gratefully condescend to persecute all those Consciences that are not as complaisant and supple as their own. And indeed, it is but generous in them to be zealous for those Notions and Ceremonies,

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which bring them Reverence and Hire: But methinks it is a little unreasonable to expect that others should, without *their* Motives, adopt *their* Zeal.

P. S. Having in my last Paper asserted, that *there is no particular Priesthood at all directed by the New Testament*; I am told it is from thence furniz'd by some, thro' Malice, and by others, thro' Mistake, that I do by this insinuate, that there is therefore no Occasion for any Church-Ministry whatsoever, notwithstanding my former Declarations upon this Head. I particularly say in my Third Paper, speaking of the Clergy:

‘ Their Office is evidently adapted to promote the Welfare of Human Nature, and to propagate its Peace and Prosperity in this World, as well as its eternal Felicity in the next; so that it is the Interest of all Men to honour it: and none but a Madman will condemn and ridicule what has a manifest Tendency to the Security and Happiness of all Mankind.

I say also in my Fourth Paper, that *I sincerely think their Office to be absolutely necessary to the Peace and Happiness of Society*. I could likewise refer to other Passages. But to give full Satisfaction once for all, to such as will be satisfy'd, I declare that I do only contend for the Right of every National and Voluntary Society to appoint their own Pastors, and to judge of their Doctrines and Be-

Behaviour: Further than this I have no Aim. Nor do I desire to lessen the Respect due to the Clergy from their Merit and Usefulness; or the Dignities, Privileges, and Revenues which they derive from the Law, or from the good Will and Contributions of the People. And I intend very soon to defend the Church of *England* upon the Principles and Authority of the Scripture and the Law; as well as the Toleration granted to Dissenters by the same Law, and the same Scripture.

N U M B E R X I.

Wednesday, March 30. 1720.

*The Advantageous Situation of the Clergy,
strangely inconsistent with their common
Cry of Danger.*



V I R T U E and Innocence were created naked and undisguised; nor did our first Parents cover themselves till they had offended. Truth can never sin, and therefore need not, and ought

76 *The Independent Whig.*

ought not, ever to appear in Masquerade : She is most amiable when most uncovered ; and appears truly Majestick, and in greatest Lustre, when disrobed of all gaudy and affected Ornaments : Her Natural Features want no Varnish or Colouring, nor has she any need of Dressers and Tire-Women.

Knavery and Deformity alone want Daubing and Disguise. Actors do not care that any one should look into the Tiring-Room, nor Juglers or Sharpers into their Hands or Boxes ; whereas Honesty and Sincerity appear always barefaced, and shew themselves most in open Day ; they scorn all indirect Advantages, and borrowed Helps, but trust alone to their own native Beauty and intrinsic Strength : The Lion is never known to use Cunning.

I confess, that I am not Master enough of my Temper to avoid Laughter, and Indignation, by Turns, at the noisy Clamours of the High Clergy, against the Freedom of the Age, and the Liberty of the Press ; as if Virtue was inconsistent with Good Sense, or Truth could suffer by Knowledge, or Religion by a free and thorough Examination. What Figure would a grave Lawyer make in *Westminster-Hall*, if, after he had been tiring his Auditors for Two Hours together, he should desire the Judges not to hear the Counsel of the other Side, lest they should perplex the Cause, and mislead the Court.

Every Stander-by would take it for granted, that he was conscious of the Weakness of his Client's Cause, and that it could no otherwise be defended, than by being not understood. This is, in Point, the Case of those, who demand of all Mankind to be heard by the Clock, and will yet hear no Body; who talk and rail by Wholesale, whilst they cannot bear a single Jest, or ludicrous Expression; and who write Volumes by the Yard themselves, and are in an Uproar, and Outrageous, at a single Half-Sheet of other Peoples.

How absurd would it appear for an Army of an Hundred Thousand Men, entrench'd up to the Ears, to call aloud for the Assistance of the Constable and Watch, to defend their Camp against the Assaults and Storms of Highwaymen and House-breakers! Just such a Request do the Popish Clergy Abroad make, when they cry out, Fire, Fire! Help, Help! and demand the Assistance of the Secular Power; and insist, that no Sermons be preached, Books printed, or Harangues made, but their own. They have already more Advantages than Truth can desire, and indeed enough to offend her Modesty, and to make her ashamed and blush; they are too well armed for a fair Adversary, and yet are always complaining of the Shortness of their Weapons; and declaring themselves overcome, by calling out for more Help.

78 *The Independent Whig.*

Besides the Piety and Example of their Lives, they are vastly numerous, and in Possession of great and various Dignities, and immense Revenues and Dependencies; are all bred up to Letters; have the Prejudices of the People, the sole Education of Youth, the Fears as well as the Favours of the fair Sex on their Side; and have the Weekly Opportunity of haranguing to the People upon their own Usefulness and Importance: And they tell us too, they have a sole Right to the Scripture Prophecy, *That the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against them.*

Crown'd Heads always have thought it their Interest to keep Measures with them; Ministers of State are not able to Trick successfully, and play the Knave, without their Leave and Assistance: They take Advantage, and make their Market of all Factions and Disturbances in States, and apply them to their own Benefit: Knaves shelter themselves under their Protection; Hypocrites court and seem to admire them, and Bigots and Enthusiasts adore them. Every Event of Life contributes to their Interests: They Christen; they Educate; they Marry; they Church; they Bury; they Perswade; they Frighten; they Govern; and scarce any Thing is done without them. Notwithstanding all this, they roar aloud, that they cannot keep their Ground, but that Contempt and Infidelity pour in upon them like an Inundation.

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And yet it is very remarkable, that the first Christians were not only destitute of all the before-mentioned Advantages, but their Enemies enjoyed them ; and they themselves were persecuted and contemned, buffeted, ridiculed and calumniated, in constant Books and Libels, published by the greatest Philosophers and Wits of the Heathen World ; and yet Christianity every Day spread far and wide, and made a wonderful Progress ; inso-much, that in an Age or Two, Superstition and Idolatry were driven from a great Part of the Earth.

A Speculation upon this Head, and an Enquiry into the Causes of so prodigious a Change, would be worthy the Endeavours of the brightest Wits and Genius's of our Age and Country, who undoubtedly must be found amongst our own genuine Clergy. I have long wished to see a Dissertation upon this great and useful Subject ; and with the greatest Humility propose to the Consideration of the Lower House of Convocation at their next (so much desired) Meeting, to give the the World their Thoughts upon it, in a Second Representation of the Causes of Vice and Infidelity : And in Hopes to encourage them in so publick an Undertaking, I intend before that Happy Day, to give them my poor Assistance, and in some Measure to alleviate their Labours, by endeavouring to prove that no Part of this Misfortune ought to be laid at the Door of the Laity.

80 *The Independent Whig.*

Indeed, it would be unbecoming the Respect and Reverence, which I have always professed, and hope shall always pay to these Reverend Gentlemen, to but hint at any Thing so improbable as the contrary Conjecture: For since Human Nature is always the same, who can entertain so undecent a Thought of their Designs, or have such a Contempt of their Performances, as to imagine that Mankind can grow worse under the Light of the Gospel, and in Defiance of their pious Lives and Examples; and of the numerous Forms of publick and private Prayer; their constant Sermons, and godly Exhortations; and of so many Creeds, Catechisms, Systems, Commentaries, and whole Cart-Loads of other ghostly Geer, which the World is every Day bless'd with from the laborious Endeavours of above a Million of Ecclesiasticks, or more; who have always, and do still, cost the People more than their whole Civil and Military Expence put together? Therefore, since we may be sure that this great Change and Degeneracy cannot be owing to any remaining Defect amongst the Laity, it may well be expected from Persons of *their* Penetration and Perspicuity, to let us into the true Causes of so surprizing a Phænomenon,

In the mean Time, (tho' with all the due Submission of an humble Votary) I shall for once presume to advise them, not to level so many Batteries against good Sense and hu-
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man Reason, which are impreguably fortified and secure against the fiercest Assaults. A great Philosopher tells us, *when Reason is against a Man, a Man will be against Reason*; and therefore I much fear if these my Friends, and Patrons, should continue to hold forth and exert their Eloquence against Private Judgment, Freedom of Enquiry, and a daily and diligent Search after a religious Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, that the World may mistake their Endeavours, and imagine all these good Things make against them; and yet unfortunately they are in such Repute, that there are little Hopes of depreciating or putting them out of Countenance.

Besides, I humbly conceive it to be impolitic upon other Accounts too. It appears to me to be very indiscreet in Persons *Militant*; to endeavour to put an End to a War, which for the most part puts an End to themselves and their own Pay. A jovial Country Parson once in a merry Mood, passing by a Waggon which was overturn'd, told the Carter that he had kill'd the Devil; to which the profane Wretch reply'd, that he was glad of it with all his Heart, *because then*, quoth Ralph, *I have spoiled your Trade*. A Word to the Wise is sufficient.

Methinks also, it should be doing too much Credit to his *Satanick Majesty*, to suppose him more than a Match for a Million of consecrated Persons, with all their Hierarchial Powers, and, as they say, Divine Assistances about them.

NUMBER XII.

Wednesday, April 6. 1720.

The Enmity of the High Clergy to the Reformation, and their Arts to Defeat the End of it.



Achiavel advises any One, who would change the Constitution of a State, to keep as much as possible to the old Forms; for then the People seeing the same Officers, the same Formalities, Courts of Justice, and other outward Appearances, are insensible of the Alteration, and believe themselves in Possession of their old Government.

Thus, *Cæsar*, when he seized the *Roman* Liberties, caused himself to be chosen *Dictator*, (which was an Ancient Office) continued the Senate, the Consuls, the Tribunes, the Censors, and all other Powers of the Common-Wealth; and yet changed *Rome* from the most Free, to the most Tyrannical Government in the World: This

The Independent Whig. 83

This Policy is yet more necessary to be observed in altering the Religion of a Country; for very few Persons, of any Sect or Party in Faith, are conversant with the Speculations or distinguishing Tenets of their own Church, or so much as know what they are.

Whilst they see the same broad-brim'd Hats, Bands, Cassocks, and Long Gowns; and hear the same Psalms sung in the same Tone, and in the same fashioned Buildings; they think they have the same Religion, and will be angry with any one who shall tell them the Contrary.

But if the Ceremonies or other Forms of Religious Worship are to be altered too, the Change must be made insensibly, and by Degrees, that the Difference may be unobserved, or thought of no Consequence; and all Advantages must be taken of Revolutions in Government, of Publick Calamities, and of Factions, when they beat high, and are ready to fall into any Measures to oppose and mortify each other.

The Priesthood in all Ages have made these Arts, and a Thousand others, contribute to their Greatness; and the High-Church Jacobite Clergy of *England* have put them all in Practice to regain every Thing they lost at the *Reformation*; and if they could but have prevailed upon their Flocks to have followed them, they had long ago sold them again in the *Roman Market*: But since we of the Lai-

84 *The Independent Whig.*

ty are so refractory, and hang backward, they now seem resolved to gallop away by themselves, and leave us to come our own Pace after ; insomuch that a Clergyman of the Church of *England*, as by Law Established, is, at present, become a most agreeable Sight, and many of his Brethren treat him as a Monster.

It must be evident to any one, who has read our Ecclesiastical Story, that the Reformation in *England* was carry'd on, not only without, but against the Consent of the whole Body of the Clergy, (very few excepted) who always opposed every Step towards their own Amendment : It was, indeed, every where, properly speaking, an Effort, or Insurrection of the Laity, against the Pride and Oppression of the Priests, who had cheated them of their Estates, imposed upon their Consciences, debauched their Wives, and were ever insulting their Persons.

The poor Injured People had long felt the Malady, but were so intimidated by their own Superstition, and the over-grown Power of their haughty Masters, that they durst not think of a Remedy, till a bold and disobliged Friar or Two dissolved the Enchantment ; and then the whole Christian World seemed to rise at once against this Fairy and Fantastical Empire.

But People long used to Servitude, knowing not what Freedom is, or how to preserve it when thrown into their Laps, have always

Recourse to some Leaders, of whose Honesty and greater Wisdom they have conceived an Opinion ; and these for the most Part abuse such Confidence, to advance their own Views of Wealth and Power.

So it happened in this Case ; and consequently the Reformation went partially on, according to the Direction under which it fell : Where Priests were at the Head of it, they attempted only to make it a Reformation of Sounds and Distinctions : They took no Offence at the Riches and Grandeur of the Clergy, (which was the Source of all other Evils) but were angry that they had not their Share of them ; and so look'd upon the Revolt only as a Means to aggrandize themselves : They condemned not the Tyranny, but the Tyrants ; and attempted to usurp that Power in their own Persons, which they loudly exclaimed against in the *Romish* Priesthood : Most Sets of them wonderfully well agreed, that there was a Divine Right in the Clergy to dictate to the Laity in Religious Matters ; but every Sect claimed that Power to themselves, independent of all others.

They cou'd not agree about sharing the Prey, but each would have had the Whole ; which had this good Effect however, that they were all obliged to abate much of their Pretensions, in order to engage Customers ; and, I thank God, they have not yet been able to raise the Price again to the old Market ; tho', to do them Justice, they are no Ways answer-

86 *The Independent Whig.*

able to their Successors, for having let slip any Opportunity, to that Purpose.

But whilst they were thus carrying on their Project for Dominion, they found it necessary to throw out a Barrel to the Whale, and keep the Peoples Minds busied, and their Passions afloat, with Metaphysical Subtilties and Distinctions, of no Use to true Religion and Morality, tho' very conducive to their own ambitious and tyrannical Designs.

I would gladly know from these Reverend Venders of Trifles, whether it would have been worth the Thousandth Part of the Combustion which has been made, or the Blood which has been spilt, only to settle a few Speculations, if they could have been settled? Pray where is the essential Difference between *Transubstantiation*, *Consubstantiation*, and the *Real Presence*? What the Consequence, whether a Child be baptized by one sort of Priests, or by another? Or of what Use to Mankind are the abstruse Questions about *Predestination*, *Free-Will*, or *Free Grace*? What is the Difference, as to the Duties or Ordinances of Christianity, if they are administered under the Direction of a single Person, a Bench of Bishops, or a Lower House of Convocation, or none of them all, so they be piously administered? Or whether the chimerical Line of Succession is broken, or ever had a Being?

Since 'tis agreed amongst all our present Sects of Christians, that the Saviour of the
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World is the Son of God, descended from Heaven to teach Virtue and Goodness to Men, and to die for our Redemption; how are we concerned in the Scholastick Notions of the *Trinity*? Will the Scripture be more regarded, or the Precepts of it be better observed, if the Three Persons are believed to be Three Divine distinct Spirits and Minds, who are so many real subsisting Persons? Whether the Son and Holy Ghost are Omnipotent of themselves, or are subordinate and dependent on the Father? Or if they are independent, whether their Union consists in a mutual Consciousness of one another's Thoughts and Designs, or in any Thing else? Whether they are Three Attributes of God, *viz.* Goodness, Wisdom and Power? Or Three internal Acts, *viz.* Creation, Redemption and Sanctification? Or Two internal Acts of the One subsisting Person of the Father; that is to say, the Father understanding and willing himself and his own Perfections? Or Three internal Relations, namely, the Divine Substance and Godhead consider'd as Unbegotten, Begotten and Proceeding? Or Three Names of God ascribed to him in Holy Scripture, as he is Father of all Things, as he did inhabit in an extraordinary Manner in the Man Jesus Christ, and as he effected every Thing by his Spirit, or his Energy and Power? Or lastly, whether the Three Persons are only Three Beings, but what sort of Beings we neither

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88 *The Independent Whig.*

know, nor ought to pretend to know; which I take to be the Trinity of the Mob, as well as of some other wiser Heads.

As far as I can remember, these are the important Questions which have set Mankind together by the Ears, for so many Ages; and it seems are yet thought of Consequence enough to create new Fewds, and mortal Dudgeon amongst all our Sets of Ecclesiasticks. But why must we of the Laity quarrel about them too? What have Beaus and Belles, old Women, Coblers and Milk-Maids to do with *Homœousios*, *Consubstantiality*, *Personality*, *Hypostatical Union*, *Infinite Satisfaction*, &c. none of which hard Words, or any like them, are to be found in Scripture; and therefore, I think, we may even return them to *Rome*, that being the Place from whence they came, and be contented to be good Christians without them.

We ought to shew our Faith and Obedience to God, by a chearful Submission to his Commands, and not affect a vain Curiosity of prying into his Secrets; pretend to Philosophize upon his abstracted Nature and Essence; and with our limited and corrupt Understandings, assume to comprehend infinite Wisdom and Power, and define the Modus of its Existence and Operations. Almighty God would not make himself farther known even to *Moses*, nor suffer himself to be otherwise described to the Children of *Israel*, (tho' to get them out of the Land of

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Bondage) than by the comprehensive Words, *I am that I am*; which methinks might baffle our officious Impertinence, and put us in Mind of the Danger of peeping into the Ark.

The above Disputes make us neither wiser nor better: Men are not intended for Speculation; exceeding few are capable of it: The Faculties of our Minds, as well as the Frame of our Bodies, are adapted to Labour, and to supply the Exigencies of our Nature: We are formed for Society and mutual Help, and the Goodness of God has implanted in us Qualities suited to these Ends; and, besides, has given us Precepts for our Assistance, and annexed infinite Rewards to the Observance of them. We know how to be good Parents, good Children, good Neighbours, and good Subjects; but how small a Part of Mankind understand, or are capable of understanding Metaphysical Questions! When they use the Terms, it is plain they have no Ideas annexed to them, but fight at Blind-Man's Buff, and quarrel about what none of them understand: It is evident therefore that the All-wise Providence could not intend to perplex and confound weak Minds with such Subtilties, for the Knowledge of which he has not given them suitable Qualifications.



NUMBER XIII.

Wednesday, April 13. 1720.

The Church proved a Creature of the Civil Power, by Acts of Parliament, and the Oaths of the Clergy.



Have observed, in my last Paper, that many of the Protestant Priests endeavoured to divert the growing Spirit in the Christian World for Reformation, to Metaphysical and useles Speculations, of no Benefit to the present or eternal Happiness of Mankind, whilst they were seating themselves at leisure in their Predecessors Chairs.

But far otherwise was it where it fell under the Direction of Laymen, who consider'd it as an Opportunity put by Heaven into their Hands, to free themselves from the Usurpations, and unjust Domination of the Priesthood: They made no Scruple (notwithstanding the loud Cry of Sacrilege) to seize
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and apply to publick Uses, a great Part of those Riches, which the Clergy had extorted from old Women, and superstitious and enchanted Bigots; the Compositions for Murthers, for publick and private Robberies; the Plunder of dying and despairing Sinners, and the Supports of their own Idleness, Pride, Ignorance and Debauchery.

A bold and honest Physician (whose Name was *Erastus*) at this time started up, and told the World, that all these Squabbles of the Clergy about their own Power, were Disputes *de lana caprina*, and that none of them had any Right to what they almost all claimed: That the Quarrel amongst them was only which of them should oppress the Laity, who were independent of them all; for that their Ministers were their Servants, Creatures of their own making, and not of God Almighty's: He shewed them from Reason and Scripture, that every State had the same Authority of modelling their Ecclesiastical as Civil Government; that the Gospel gave no Pre-eminence, or Authority to Christians over one another, but every Man alike (who had suitable Abilities) was qualified to execute all the Duties and Offices of their most holy Religion; and that it was only a Matter of Prudence and Convenience to appoint particular Persons to officiate for the rest, with proper Rewards and Encouragements; which Persons would be intitled to no more Power than they themselves gave them.

This Doctrine, as little as it pleased the Clergy, yet prevailed so far with the Laity, that most Protestant States modelled their Ecclesiastical Polity according to their own Inclinations or Interests; and particularly, in *England*, the whole Reformation was built upon this Principle, which ever till lately, was esteemed the great Characteristick of the Church of *England*; and therefore 'tis the last Degree of Priestly Insolence for a Body of Men to call themselves the only true Churchmen, at the same time that they deny, and every where exclaim against, the fundamental and essential Article which distinguishes it from most other Churches, and particularly from Presbytery; for as to the rest of the Articles, the *Calvinists* are more Orthodox than the Churchmen themselves.

At the very Beginning of the Reformation, the Clergy here in *England*, conscious of their own Enormities, and the just Vengeance which hung over their Heads, were contented to disgorge their ill-gotten, and as ill used Power; and, in full Convocation, threw themselves upon the King's Mercy, acknowledging his Supremacy in the fullest and most significant Words; and promised in *verbo sacerdotii*, that for the future they would never presume to attempt, alledge, claim, or put in use, enact, or promulgate any Canons, Constitutions, or Ordinances, without the King's most Royal Licence and Assent had thereunto; and humbly besought his Majesty to appoint Thirty

Two Persons, half Clergy and half Laity, to examine the Canons and Constitutions in being, and to abrogate and confirm them, as they should think good.

This Petition was changed into an Act of Parliament by the 25th of *Hen.* the VIIIth, *Cap.* 19. But it is there declared, That the Crown and Convocation together, shall not put in Execution any Canons, Constitution, or Ordinances, which shall be contrariant or repugnant to the King's Prerogative, or the Laws of the Kingdom: The same Statute also gives an Appeal from the supreme Ecclesiastical Court, to the King's Commission.

In the same Session of Parliament, the Manner of Proceeding upon the *Conge d' Elire* is directed, *viz.* * A Licence from the Crown is to be sent to the Chapter to choose or elect an Archbishop or Bishop, and a Letter missive with it, to nominate the Person they are to choose; which if they do not obey, nor signify the same, according to the Tenor of the Act, within Twenty Days, they are subjected to a Præmunire; and if the Election is not made within Twelve Days, the King may nominate a Bishop by Letters Patents without any Election at all, as is now done in *Ireland*, and formerly was so in *Scotland*, where their Bishops were *durante bene placito*.

* 25 *Hen.* VIII. *Cap.* 20.

94 *The Independent Whig.*

The next Year the Parliament * reciting that the King justly and rightly is, and ought to be supreme Head of the Church of *England*, enact the same, and that he shall have full Power to visit, redress, reform, correct, and restrain all Errors, Heresies, Abuses, Offences, Contempts, and Enormities, whatsoever they be, which by any manner of spiritual Authority or Jurisdiction, ought or may be reformed, redressed, &c.

Afterwards, in the 37th Year of the same Reign, the Parliament, reciting that the Bishop of *Rome* and his Adherents, minding utterly to abolish, obscure, and delete the Power given by God to the Princes of the Earth, whereby they might get and gather to themselves the Rule and Government of the World, had decreed, that no Layman might exercise Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, lest their false and usurp'd Power which they pretended to have in Christ's Church might decay, wax vile, and be of no Reputation, (which Power they affirm to be contrary to the Word of God, and to his Majesty's most high Prerogative) and reciting also, That Archbishops, Bishops, Archdeacons, and other Ecclesiastical Persons, have no manner of Jurisdiction Ecclesiastical, but by, from, and under the King's Majesty; enacts, That Laymen, qualified as the Law appoints, may exercise all Parts of Ecclesia-

tical Jurisdiction, and all Censures and Coercions appertaining, or in any wise belonging thereunto.

The 2^d and 3^d of *Edward* the Sixth, *Cap.* 1. enacts the Common Prayer Book, (which was before compiled and drawn up by the King's Authority) and makes it a Law.

The 3^d and 4th of *Edward* the Sixth, *Cap.* 12. appoints such Form and Manner of making and consecrating Archbishops, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, and other Ministers of the Church, as by Six Prelates, and Six other Men of this Realm, by the King to be appointed and assigned, or by the greater Number of them, shall be devised, &c. and *none other*. These two Acts were confirmed with some Alterations, in the 5th and 6th Year of this Reign.

The 1st of *Queen Elizabeth*, *Cap.* 1. establishes and enacts, That all Jurisdictions, Privileges, Superiorities, and Pre-eminences, Spiritual and Ecclesiastical, at any Time lawfully used, or exercised, for the Visitation of the Ecclesiastical State or Persons, and for the Reformation, Order, and Correction of the same; and of all manner of Errors, Heresies, Schisms, Abuses, Contempts, Offences, and Enormities, shall be annexed to the Imperial Crown of this Realm; and gives Power and Authority to it to appoint any Persons, being natural born Subjects, to exercise all sorts of Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction; and declares at the same Time *what*, and *what only*, shall be deemed *Heresy*. The

96 *The Independent Whig.*

The Oath of Supremacy (which is an Assent to these Laws, and obliges those who take it, to assist and defend them) is appointed in this Act; which Oath all Ecclesiastical Persons, as well as any others, who shall be promoted and preferred to any Degree or Order in the University, are to take under severe Penalties.

The 8th of Queen *Elizabeth*, reciting that the Queen had in her Order and Disposition, all Jurisdiction, Power, and Authority, Ecclesiastical as well as Civil; and had caused divers Archbishops and Bishops to be *duly* elected, and consecrated; does confirm all the said Elections and Consecrations; as also the Common-Prayer Book, and the Orders and Forms for the making of Priests, Deacons, and Ministers, which were added to it in the Fifth and Sixth Years of *Edward* the Sixth.

All which before-mentioned Acts are now in being, in full Force, and sworn to by all the Clergy, who are subjected to a Præmunire if they contradict them.

Thus our Parliaments, at or just after the Reformation, whilst the Memory of Sacerdotal Oppressions continued in their Minds, were resolved to pare their Claws, curb their Insolence, and not leave it in their Power to corrupt Religion any more; and therefore put it under the Care of the Civil Magistrate, who could seldom have any Interest in perverting it: Whereas there is not any Instance
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when it has been left to the Conduct of any Set of Ecclesiasticks whatsoever, but they have abused and sacrificed it to the Advancement of their own Wealth and Power.

Even *Aaron* himself (though a High Priest of God's own Appointment) when *Moses*, the *Civil Magistrate*, was but a little while absent, to receive the Almighty's Commands, cheated the *Israelites* of their Earrings, melted them into a Golden Calf, and encouraged the Boobies to say, *These were the Gods which brought them out of the Land of Egypt*. He built an Altar before his Idol, proclaimed a Fast, and then made use of all this Deceit to extort from that stupid and superstitious People, Burnt-Offerings and Peace-Offerings; which provoked Almighty God to that degree, *that his Wrath was kindled against the whole Nation, and he was inclined to consume them all, till Moses, the Lay Sovereign, turned his fierce Wrath by his Prayers, and by remembering him of the Oath he swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, viz. that he would multiply their Seed like the Stars in Heaven, &c.* And then it is true, that *the Lord repented of the Evil which he thought to do unto them*: But no Thanks to the Priest, who had drawn them into this Scrape, *Exod.* Chap. 32.

NUMBER XIV.

Wednesday, April 20. 1720.

The Clergy prov'd to be Creatures of the Civil Power, by the Canons, and their own publick Acts.



IN my last Discourse, I have shewn what is meant by the Supremacy of the Crown of *England*; by virtue of which, our Kings sometimes with, and sometimes without their Parliaments, have govern'd and modelled the Ecclesiastical State, ever since the Reformation. Bishops, as well as inferior Clergymen, have been often suspended and deprived by the King's Authority; and, in the Instance of Archbishop *Abbot*, for his Pleasure. The *Po-pish* Bishops were all deprived by Queen *Elizabeth*, and some Thousands of the Parochial Clergy were ejected by the Act of Uniformity;

ty; and many also of all Orders were deprived at the Revolution.

I shall now proceed to shew what have been the Opinions and Practice of the whole Body of the Ecclesiasticks, since the making of these Laws; in doing which I shall take Notice only of their publick and Authentick Acts; for as to the Whimseys of private Doctors, I think them of so little Weight, that I shall be ashamed to quote them on either side of the Question.

Upon the Clergy's owning the King Head of the Church at the Reformation, all the Bishops took out Commissions for the exercising their Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction; which were renewed again upon his Son's coming to the Throne. In these Commissions, all Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction is owned to proceed from the Crown, as from a supreme Head and Fountain and Spring of all Magistracy, in the Kingdom; and they acknowledge, that they executed it formerly only *ex precario*, and that now with grateful Minds they accepted the Favour from the King's Liberality and Indulgence, and would be always ready to yield it up again, when his Majesty pleased to require it.

These Commissions recited, amongst other Particulars of Spiritual Power, that of Ordaining Presbyters, and of Ecclesiastical Correction.

The 2^d Canon excommunicates every one who shall endeavour to hurt or extenuate the King's Authority in Ecclesiastical Cases, as it

100 *The Independent Whig.*

is settled by the Laws of the Kingdom, and declares he shall not be restored till he has publicly recanted such *impious Errors*.

The 37th Canon obliges all Persons, to their utmost, to keep and observe all and every one of the Statutes and Laws, made for restoring to the Crown, the antient Jurisdiction it had over the Ecclesiastical State.

The 12th of King *James's* Canons declares, that whoever shall affirm that it is lawful for the Order either of Ministers or Laicks, to make Canons, Decrees, or Constitutions in Ecclesiastical Matters, without the King's Authority, and submits himself to be governed by them, is, *ipso facto*, excommunicated, and is not to be absolved before he has publicly repented and renounced these *Anabaptistical Errors*.

Archbishop *Bancroft*, when at the Head of all the Bishops in *England*, he delivered Articles to King *James* against the Secular Courts, for encroaching upon the Ecclesiastical, owns, that all Jurisdictions, Ecclesiastical as well as Civil, are annex'd to the Imperial Crown of this Realm, as may be read more at large in the Lord *Coke's Third Institute*; which I would recommend to the perusal of every one, as a Specimen of the Difference between Ecclesiasticks and Laymen.

I shall think it necessary only here to add, that the Clergy have never presumed, by any publick Act, directly to contravert this Prerogative, or indeed but to nibble at it, unless in
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one Instance during the last Reign ; which the Queen resented highly ; and she let the Convocation know, by a Letter to the Archbishop, that *she was resolved to maintain her Supremacy, as a Fundamental Part of the Constitution of the Church of England.*

This is the Supremacy of the Crown ; these are the genuine Principles of the Church of *England* ; which whoever denies, may be a *Papist*, a *Presbyterian*, a *Muggletonian*, a *Fifth Monarchy Man*, or any Thing else, besides a Member of our Communion. This Doctrine, and these Opinions, have been acknowledg'd and sworn to by every Ecclesiastick since the Reformation ; and we daily see they are All ready to swear them over again upon any fresh Motives of Advantage ; and sure no One will suggest, that the Whole Clergy of *England* have lived in the State of Perjury for near Two Hundred Years : I am sure, if this be the Case, it is not their Interest to let us know it, since their Authority must be of very little Weight in any Thing else.

We have it here upon Oath, that all Jurisdiction, Power and Authority, Spiritual or Ecclesiastical, of what Kind or Sort soever it be, does flow from, and is derived from the King's Majesty ; and I readily allow them to have all the rest by Divine Right. They have been always very happy at Distinctions and Discoveries, and therefore if they can find out any Power or Authority, which is of *no Kind or Sort whatsoever*, I think they ought to

have it for their Pains: I wish them much Joy with it; and shall own it always to be Sacrilege in any One who shall attempt to take it from them; but, if there is any such Thing, it is plain it belongs to them as Governours of the Invisible Church, and is of a Nature we know nothing of.

For it is certain, that Archbishops and Bishops are Creatures of the Civil Power, and derive their Being and Existence from it: They are chosen by the Direction of One Act of Parliament, and ordained and consecrated according to a Model prescribed by Another; in which Those who Officiate, act only Ministerially; and all other Methods of choosing them which the Clergy can devise, are declared void and ineffectual, and will not convey any Spiritual Power at all; nor, I dare say, will any Clergyman in *England* pay Submission to such a Choice, if he does not like the Man; nor if he does, provided he thinks that he shall lose any Thing by it. If the Bishops have no Power but what they derive from the Crown, they can convey None but of the same Sort to the Inferior Clergy.

I durst not have stood the Imputation of Calumny, in charging any of the present Clergy with Principles or Practices so directly in Defiance of these glaring and notorious Declarations of the whole Body, as well as their own repeated Oaths and Subscriptions, if I had not the Authority of the brightest Luminary of the present Church and Age (our
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Great Metropolitan) to bear me out, who assures us in his *Appeal*, “ That a new Sort
“ of Disciplinarians are arisen up from a-
“ mongst our selves, who seem to comply
“ with the Government of the Church, much
“ upon the same Account as Others do with
“ That of the State ; not out of Conscience
“ to their Duty, or any Love they have for
“ it ; but because it is the Establish’d Church,
“ and they cannot keep their Preferments
“ without it : They hate our Constitution,
“ and All who stand up in good Earnest for
“ it ; but for all that, they hold fast to it ;
“ and so go on to subscribe and rail.”

To these wild and Enthusiastick Notions we owe the present Disaffection ; and most, if not all the Calamities and Publick Disturbances that have happen’d since the *Revolution* ; and yet (which is amazing to think of) they have prevailed so far amongst the corrupt Part of the Ecclesiasticks, that I wish we could find more even of the Low-Church Clergymen, who dare thoroughly to renounce these *Impious and Anabaptistical Errors*, as their own Canons call them.

Dominion! Dominion is the loud Cry ; which, as it has already produced all the Cruelties and Absurdities of Popery, so it is still teeming with, or bringing forth new Monsters ; and what other Issue can be expected from so unnatural a Copulation as that of the Christian Priesthood with worldly Power ?

104 *The Independent Whig.*


To this we are beholden for all the Corruptions and Fopperies brought into Religious Worship, as well as the ill-shapen and ungainly Brats of Passive Obedience; the Divine Right of Kings and Bishops; the Uninterrupted Succession; the Priests Power of the Keys; of Binding and Loosing; remitting and retaining Sins; the Real Presence in the Sacrament; the Altar, and Unbloody Sacrifice upon it; the giving the Holy Ghost; of Excommunication, as laid Claim to; and Consecration of Churches and Church-Yards; the Reconciliation of God's knowing what we shall do with a Power in us not to do it; of Persecution for Opinions, and the Tritheistical Charity; with a long Train of Monkish Fooleries besides: All, or any Part of which, could never have entered into the Heart of One Layman, or Clergyman either, if Nothing had been to be got by them.



NUMBER XV.

Wednesday, April 27. 1720.

The Absurdity and Impossibility of Church-Power, as independent on the State.

 Have shewn, in my last two Discourses, that the Clergy of *England* have no Jurisdiction, Power, or Authority whatsoever, which is not derived mediately or immediately from the Legislature; and that they have all sworn to this Principle: I now own my self so much concern'd for their Reputation, that I will even run the Hazard of incurring the Displeasure of some of them, by proving, that they have taken true Oaths, and that it is impossible to constitute a Protestant National Church upon any other Foundation.

I intend to shew, in the Course of these Papers, that there is not the least Colour or Pretence for the chimerical Distinction of Ecclesiastical and Civil, in any other Sense than

106 *The Independent Whig.*

as the Words *Maritime* and *Military*, are used to denote different Branches of the Executive Power: for, take away the legal Establishment, and the Clergy can have no Power at all, but what flows from the Consent of voluntary Societies; which I undertake hereafter demonstratively to make out; and I defy all the Ecclesiasticks in the World, united together, to take one Step towards proving the contrary, without plunging themselves in everlasting Nonsense and Absurdity.

But to keep them a little in good Humour, I will suppose, for the present, that their wild Hypothesis is true; and that our Saviour, whilst upon Earth, (even against his own Declarations) had Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction over the whole Earth; that he gave it to the Apostles; that they convey'd it on to their Successors; and that the Church of *Rome*, and the present Clergy of the Church of *England*, as by Law established, are their undoubted Successors: Nay, I will be so civil as not to ask one Question, what sort of Power that was? but take it for granted it was worldly Authority, and ought to be rewarded and supported by worldly Equipage, Wealth, and Titles; and if they have any Thing more to ask of me, I will grant that too, and then examine what Use can be made of these Concessions to the present Purpose.

I desire first to be informed, from whence they will fetch their Ecclesiastical Heraldry of Archbishops, Diocesan Bishops, Deans, Chapters,

Chapters, Arch-deacons, the new Office of Deacons, Officials, Commissaries, the Two Houses of Convocation with co-ordinate Powers, Ecclesiastical Courts, Parish Priests, and Curates, with the whole Train of inferior Machines, and spiritual Under-strappers. Here I doubt all their Texts, all their Schemes will fail them; for very few of these hard Names will be found even in their own Translations of the Bible, and they must have Recourse to Human Authority at last.

If they say, (as I suspect they will) that the Government of the Church being conveyed down to the Bishops from the Apostles, they must have all Power which is necessary to it; and consequently have a Right to appoint Courts of Judicature, and Ecclesiastical Officers, as also to give them proper Powers to answer the Ends of their Trust.

I would then ask them, whether this great Episcopal Authority is given to every Bishop, independent of all the rest; to all the Bishops of the whole Church every where dispersed, agreeing together; to the Majority of this Whole; or to the Majority of any Number of them meeting in one Place, either by Consent, Accident, or the Appointment of Princes or States? For, I think, it must be agreed by all the World, that if the Bishops had any Power from God, which is Independent of the Civil Sovereign, he cannot restrain, model, or limit it; and that any accidental Alterations of the Bounds of Dominions, either

108 *The Independent Whig.*

ther from Conquest, Chance or Consent, can no Way affect this Divine Authority, or hinder its Operation.

If every Bishop has this whole Power delegated to him from God; then by what Authority can the Exercise of it be afterwards restrained to a particular District or Diocese, so as to make his Actions out of it, not only *invalid*, but *schismatical* and criminal? Who can limit a Power given by the Almighty? Not the Civil Sovereign, who has nothing to do in another Jurisdiction; nor the Bishop himself, who must accept it upon the Terms God has given it.

It cannot be supposed that he receives it for his own Sake, but as a Trust for the Benefit of Christianity; and it must be the highest Breach of this great Trust, not to discharge it personally, but to divide it with others, of whose Honesty he can have no sufficient Knowledge.

Besides, when these Bishops differ with one another, (which will happen as often as they have different Complexions, Interests, or Understandings) what must the Christian World then do? Must they follow the Bishop of *B—r*, or the Abbot of *W—*? Or suspend their Christianity till they are all agreed? A solid Rock truly to build God's Church upon!

So great a Body of Men as the whole Christian Church, or the Majority of them, never did, or could meet together; and if
such

such a Thing was possible, they would only Scold or Fight; and therefore any one may with great Modesty affirm, that no Ecclesiastical Establishment now in the World did, or could, take its Rise from such an Assembly.

Nothing therefore remains, but that, once upon a Time, a certain Number of Bishops met together, and settled such Constitutions, from which the rest are derived; otherwise we must fetch them from the Civil Magistrate, or confess them all to be Usurpations.

Those who suppose the first, are obliged to tell us what Number are necessary to this Purpose; and if another equal Number should settle a different Establishment in the same District or Province, who will be the Schismatics: I think it is agreed by all High-Churchmen, that every one of these can make as many other Bishops, and Governors of the whole Church, as he pleases; and therefore if one of them in a frolicksome Humour should create Two or Three Hundred of these *Ecclesiastical Princes*, are they all to have Votes in the *Episcopal College*? And I ask this Question the rather, because I my self once knew a Drunken Popish Bishop in *Ireland*, who would have made these Spiritual Sovereigns from Morning to Night, for a Pot of Ale a Piece.

If it should be said (as indeed what is not or may not be said by Persons of their Perspicuity?)

110 *The Independent Whig.*

spicuity ?) that the Power it self comes from God, but the Exercise of it is to be limited and directed by the Civil Sovereign ; I answer, that, besides the egregious Blunder of distinguishing between Power and the Exercise of Power, the first being only a Right to do certain Actions, in which the other consists : this gives up the whole Question ; for there can be no greater Power necessary to give an Authority than to take it away ; and every Restriction and Limitation is taking it away in Part : No one can have a Right to depose a Temporal Prince from any Part of his just Dominions, without having also the same Right to deprive him of the whole ; and in this Respect there can be no Difference between Temporal and Ecclesiastical Sovereignties.

If these Gentlemen were not in Possession of sanctifying Nonsense, they could not venture to tell us, that our Saviour has given Power to Bishops to execute Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction thro' the whole Earth ; and consequently all Mankind must be their Spiritual Subjects : But that this great Power may here below be limited and restrained to Cities or Provinces, and parcelled out and divided in such a Manner, that some may have large Districts, others small ones, in which no one else must officiate ; nay, that many more may have none at all, and yet every one have universal Jurisdiction, and be a Bishop of the whole Earth.

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The Independent Whig. III

These, with a huge Heap besides of glaring Absurdities and Contradictions, must be maintained by those, who would reconcile the divine Right of Bishops with any Protestant Establishment now in the World. I have so amply shewn how inconsistent it is with our own, from the whole Tenor of our Laws and Canons, as well as the repeated Acknowledgments of the Clergy themselves, that I should think it not only needless but impertinent to say any thing further of it, did we not daily hear of such Numbers of our Spiritual Guides, who rail against these Laws at the Time they swear and subscribe to them, and complain aloud of them as Violations of their own divine Rights, and denounce Judgments upon the Nation for such Usurpations.

Therefore in my next Paper I shall descant a little upon the voluntary and most applauded Actions of the highest, even of these High Gentlemen; and shew that they cannot help acknowledging the Principle I maintain, even in the Instances where they would oppose it, and amidst their greatest Demands for Power. This I intend to do, not with the least Expectation or vain Hope to induce them to alter their Measures, (there being a Prescription among the Ecclesiasticks against such Lay Follies,) but (if possible) to open the Eyes of their blind and stupid Adorers, and to let them see what wretched Idols they are worshipping.

NUMBER XVI.

Wednesday, May 4. 1720.

The Inconsistency of the Principles and Practices of High-Church ; with some Advice to the Clergy.



IF the Ecclesiasticks have any divine Right, which is neither derived from the Civil Magistrate, nor the Consent of voluntary Societies, it must be vested in a single Person ; in a certain Number of Persons, which we all call Bishops ; or in common to them all : The First is *Po-pery*, and the Last *Presbytery*. But I think there is no Establishment which now subsists, or ever did subsist in the World, which does or did assert the divine Right of Bishops, Independent of the Pope ; and consequently it is the *Proprium*, or peculiar Whimsy of our own perjured High-Churchmen, not only in Oppo-

Opposition to their Oaths and Subscriptions (as I have shewed already) but to the most applauded Actions of their greatest Champions; which 'tis the Business of this Paper to make out.

If there be a divine Right in the Bishops to Govern the Church, it is spiritual Rebellion, and the highest Sacrilege, to usurp upon this great Authority; but then, what will become of all the daily Daubing and fulsome Panegyrick upon the best established Church in the World? Since I think it is agreed by all the Clergy, that the Power of Legislation, as far as they have any thing to do with it, is vested in the Convocation, which consists of two Houses, one of Bishops, the other of Presbyters; a Constitution utterly inconsistent with this divine Right; which the High-Clergy have been so far from regretting or complaining of, that it is one of their most essential Characteristicks, to maintain the Power of the Lower House against the Upper; that is, of Presbyters against their own Diocesans.

They claim a co-ordinate Power with them in the supremest Acts of Church Government; an Authority of acting by themselves, to choose their own time of meeting, to sit as often and as long as they please, to adjourn by their own Authority, to begin what Business they think fit, to choose their own Committees, excuse Absence, receive Proxies, judge of Elections, censure their own Members, and do all other Acts, which ought to be done by the sole Authority of a House

114 *The Independent Whig.*

which is it's own Master and Judge: All which, though they are rank Presbytery, yet are also become the genuine Principles of modern High-Churchmen; at the same time that they assert a sole, divine, Apostolick, and independent Power in the Bishops to Govern the Church.

The asserting of these Rights of the Lower-House, is the Merit of their present Champion, supplies the Wants of Charity in him, and covers a Thousand Faults; and 'tis much to be feared and lamented, that all the late Zeal of a much greater Man, and the present Services he is doing, will scarcely atone for his having acted formerly upon Low-Church Principles, in defending the Prerogative of the Crown, and maintaining the Power of the Upper-House over the Lower.

What Persons or Party have supported the Bishops and their Authority, ever since the Revolution, against their own Presbyters? All Low-Churchmen. Who were those who have been always aspersing, calumniating and libelling the two last Arch-Bishops, our present Metropolitan, till very lately, the last Bishop of *Salisbury*, and indeed every worthy Prelate; but the High-Church Priests and their Followers? And who have honoured and defended their Persons and Characters, but Low-Churchmen?

Who exhibited Articles against a present Bishop, for having impeached the King's Supremacy in Ecclesiastical Affairs, (wholly inconsistent with the divine Right of Bishops) but the

the High-Church Clergy? Who supported the late Dean of *Carlisle* against his own Diocesan? All High-Churchmen. And who defended both these Bishops? All Low-Churchmen. Who burnt by the Hands of the common Hangman, a Book wrote by a Right Reverend Bishop, which asserted King *William's* Title upon the once genuine Principles of Conquest, and pass'd a scandalous and groundless Vote upon the late learned Bishop of *Worcester*, but High-Churchmen? And who voted for these Bishops? All Low-Churchmen.

Such open Blunders and glaring Inconsistencies must these Men be reduced to, who measure all Opinions by their present Interest and Passions; and who have no other Standard of Right and Wrong, but what most gratifies their Ambition, Pride, Covetousness, or Revenge.

I can safely say, that, as I had no Interest in entering upon this Design, nor can have any in continuing it, but to promote the Cause of Virtue and Truth, and to support our present legal Establishment; by shewing the Laity that they are free, both by the Laws of God and their Country, from all the wild and enthusiastick Pretensions of the high-flown Ecclesiasticks: As I was willing also, not wholly to despair of being able to restore again the Apostate Clergymen to the Church of *England*, and to make them really of the Principles they swear to, pretend to monopolize, and yet constantly oppose;

116 *The Independent Whig.*

so I shall have the utmost Pleasure, if I can contribute to, these great Ends, and shall rejoyce over such an Occasion, to drop this Paper.

As the High Clergy can have no other Motive to pursue these Principles, but the temporal Interest of their Order, in opposition to Christianity, and the apparent Laws of their Country; so I shall endeavour to convince them, that they are grasping at what they can never reach; and, with the Dog in the Fable, loosing a Substance to catch at a Shadow.

It was a Saying of the wise Lord *Halifax*, that Dr. *Echard*, in his Treatise of the *Contempt of the Clergy*, had omitted the *chief Cause* of it, namely, (not their Ignorance, but) *the Knowledge of the Laity*; and it is very true, that the Mists of Superstition and Fear, which have been so long raising before our Eyes, are pretty well dissipated and dispers'd; nor will an Horizontal Hat, a starch'd Band, and long Petticoats, pass in this Age for essential Marks of Wisdom and Virtue.

The *Rehearsal* has long since told us, that the gravest of all Beasts is an *Ass*, and the gravest of all Birds is an *Owl*; and indeed the World seems generally of Opinion now, that sound Sense, polite Learning, good Breeding, and an easy and affable Conversation, are not only consistent with true Religion, but are most productive of it; and sure it cannot be denied, that the Laity, for the most part, exceed in these Qualities. They

They are resolv'd, at last, to see with their own Eyes, hear with their own Ears, and feel with their own Hands: *Ipsæ dixit* will pass no longer. It is a ridiculous Attempt to endeavour to deceive any one; who will not consent to be hood-wink'd: A Jade will not be put into an Horse-Mill, till she is blinded; nor could *Sampson* be led about and about by the *Philistines*, till they had put out his Eyes; therefore I would give my old Friends a Hint, tho' I doubt to little Purpose, namely, to change the Course of their Sailing, according to the shifting of the Winds and the Tides, and not run the Danger of Shipwreck upon those Coasts, where their Predecessors formerly found deep Water and safe Riding.

I am sensible, many of the High-Church *Popish* Clergy will laugh in their Sleeves at this Advice, and think there is Folly enough yet left among the Laity, to support their Authority; and will hug themselves, and rejoyce over the Ignorance of the Universities, the Stupidity of the drunken Squires, the Pannick of the tender Sex, and the never to be shaken Constancy of the *Mobility*; but I would put them in Mind, that all these fine Visions have once already mislead and deceived them, and therefore may again.

I desire they will count their Gains, and recollect what Addition of Power they got, or were like to have got, by the late great Revolution of temporal Politicks, which they were so instru-

118 *The Independent Whig.*

mental to bring about: Indeed they were call'd together, and had a Liberty given them to scold and quarrel with one another; but they were not suffered to hurt so much as a Mouse; and even Mr. *Whiston* laugh'd at them. Whilst their Patrons were making their Court to *France* and the *Pretender*, for Preferments; the Lower-House of *Convocation* was very usefully employ'd and diverted, in compiling Forms of Prayer for consecrating Church-Yards, and for Criminals who were to be hang'd; which, 'tis said, a certain Great Person then call'd, *Throwing out a Barrel to the Whale*.

I am afraid, they are not well informed of what it much concerns them to know, namely, that even the *Tories* themselves will not be Priest-ridden; and that those amongst them, who have any Sense, laugh at High-Church Principles in private, tho' they Bow to the Broachers of them, and seem to admire them in publick; of the Truth of which I my self have been frequently a Witness: So that of whatever Importance they may seem to themselves, they are, in Troth, but the Tools and Cats-Feet to the worst of Men; are only employ'd to do their Drudgery, and run down their Game; and will scarce have for their Pains even the picking of the Bones, when (like Jackals) they have hunted down the Lyon's Prey.

I should not have thought my self at Liberty to have unburthen'd my Mind thus
freely,

freely, if it had not been to have served some of my Friends among these High-Church Clergy, by helping them to a little of that Understanding, which is not to be learn'd in Universities, and in Conversation with one another ; and I wish, (tho' I cannot hope, much less perswade my self to believe) that when they have duly consider'd what I have said, they will change their Style, and endeavour to atone for all the Mischiefs they have hitherto done, by being hereafter Advocates for Civil and Ecclesiastical Liberty ; will make use of the Influence they have over the poor deluded Mobility, to promote true Religion, as well as Peace and Happiness, amongst Mankind ; and be no longer the Boutefeus or Incendiaries of every popular Faction and Tumult. *Which God, of his infinite Mercy, grant, &c.*



NUMBER XVII.

Wednesday, May 11. 1720.

Reasons *why* the High-Church Priests
are the most Wicked of all Men.



IT seems natural and reasonable to suppose, that Clergymen, who have a learned, ingenuous, and Christian Education; who are bred up in strict Discipline; who in their Youth study the Works of *PLATO, ARISTOTLE, CICERO*, and other Heathen Moralists; as also the Books of the Old and New Testament, which they believe to be divinely inspir'd; who attend daily Prayers, and frequent Sacraments; who pretend to have a Call from the *Holy Ghost, to teach* the World; who spend a great Part of their Time in composing divine Discourses or Sermons; who are obliged to Pray and Converse daily with Weak, Sick, and scrupulous Parishioners, about heavenly Matters; who, by Conversation and close
Union

Union with one another at Visitations, and other holy Meetings, and (I presume) by Prayers together, have great Opportunities of improving themselves in Vertue and Godliness; and who are under a particular Obligation to set good Examples, and under a sort of Necessity to observe some Decorum; should be *better*, than other Men. But yet, it is a Matter of common Observation, that they are not so; almost all in the *Roman* Church, and too many in other Churches, being notoriously guilty in an eminent Degree of those Vices, which are of most pernicious or most extensive ill Consequences, and most Anti-Christian; such as Ambition, Pride, Anger, Hatred, Malice, Revenge, Litigiousness, Uncharitableness, Hypocrisy, Persecution, Sedition, Treason, Equivocation, and Perjury; (whereof Multitudes of the Laity are not only wholly innocent, but remarkable for the Virtues opposite to them;) to say nothing of their equal Guilt with other Men in respect to the inferior Vices of Swearing, Drunkenness, and such like. And this Fact is honestly confess'd by the late Bishop of *Sarum*, who in his *Memoirs* (which we expect soon to see publish'd, with the utmost Impatience) tells us, that *he always believes well of Laymen, till he sees Cause to change his Mind; tho', as to Churchmen, it is otherwise with him; for he has seen so much amiss in that Profession, that he is inclin'd always to think ill of them, till he sees Cause to think otherwise.*

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Whereupon, it is a frequent Subject of Inquiry, how it comes to pass, or what are the Causes of this Fact, which would never be credited if it was not very manifest. Some are at a Loss about this Matter; but, for my Part, I am not. And the *Fact* is no more surprizing to me, than are other *common Facts* concerning Men; which, by being *common*, must have plain and manifest Causes. The *Causes* of this *Fact*, in particular, are so plain to me, that from the mere Consideration of *them*, I should wonder if I found the Clergy better than they are; and I esteem those Causes to be so necessarily productive of their Effect, that I do not think it Presumption to pretend to know the Doings of the *High Clergy* in all Ages to have been wicked, even without *History* or *Testimony*, which are requisite to give us the Knowledge of other Mens Crimes. *GROTIUS's* Observation, * *qui legit historiam Ecclesiasticam, quid legit nisi vitia Episcoporum?* must be true, and justly apply'd to all other Clergy as well as the Christian.

It is not the Design of this Paper, to assign the general Causes of this Fact, or all the particular Causes, which render so *many* of our Clergy so bad as they are. That Subject I reserve for a Treatise by it self. I shall at present only assign some of those Causes, which I conceive to have the most

* Ecclesiastical History, nothing else but a Detail of the Villanies of Priests.

direct Influence on the Morals of so many of our Clergy.

Youth is the great Opportunity of Life, which setteth and fixeth most Men either in a good or bad Course; and the Impressions, especially bad Impressions, then made, are usually lasting. Youth is also a Time of Innocence, when Men have Horror for Vice, which they never commit at first without offering Violence to themselves. The first and most natural Thoughts of Man are to be Honest, and Just, and Reasonable, as the best Things he can do for his own Sake; and it is the Influence of ill Example, and of the common Practice of the World, which, for the most Part, changes his Sentiments, and puts him upon ill Actions. But the natural Innocence of Youth being once broke in upon, Man by Degrees grows harden'd and impudent in Wickedness, and commits it without Shame or Remorse.

Nothing therefore has so direct a Tendency to debauch the World, as to debauch the Youth: And the earlier, the more effectual; for thereby Innocence and Vertue may be so effac'd, as in a little Time to leave no Memory or Trace of them, no more than *QUARTILLA* in *PETRONIUS ARBITER* had, who, tho' a young Woman, *did not remember that she had ever been a Maid.*

Now, it seems to me peculiar to the Clergy, in most Parts of *Christendom*, to begin
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the World with the greatest Breach upon the natural Honesty and Integrity of Youth, and with the greatest Violence upon their own Consciences, that can be imagin'd; as will be evident from the following Particulars.

1. First, the Youth who are sent to Universities, are early initiated into Perjury, by being obliged to take College Oaths, in some respects impertinent or ridiculous, in others wicked, or impossible to be kept; by which Means, False Swearing becomes familiar to them, and they esteem Oaths only as Matters of Form, and their Breach to be but common Qualifications for Preferment.

2. Secondly, When they go into *Holy Orders*, they profess, that they *are inwardly mov'd by the Holy Ghost to take upon them their Office*: tho' nothing is more notorious, than that many are *inwardly mov'd* by the Prospect of Power and Wealth, and by Necessity of a Maintenance; and that many use all the Arts and Means, to no Purpose, to procure to themselves Law and Physick Fellowships in Colleges, and other Lay-Preferments, (where no Engagements contrary to their Judgments and Consciences are requisite) in Order to avoid the Burden of going into Orders: And by Consequence, that they feel no *inward Motions of the Holy Ghost*; unless he can be suppos'd constantly to concur just as serves the Purposes of Men engag'd in the Pursuit of their Temporal Interests. Here then is a solemn Lye and Prostitution

titution of the Conscience, in all those who do not feel themselves mov'd by the Holy Ghost.

3. Thirdly, Many of the Clergy Abroad subscribe *Articles of Religion*, which they do not believe. Mr. WHISTON (*Essays, &c.* p. 237.) says, he *believes there is scarce one Clergyman, even of our reformed Church, that has consider'd and examin'd Things with any Care, who believes all the 39 Articles in their proper and original Meaning.* This implies, that the Unbelievers, among the Clergy, of the *Articles*, are very numerous; unless it be suppos'd, that few of the Clergy *consider and examine Things with any Care.* But the Thing is manifest from the *Sophistry* and *Knavery* used by many of them to palliate their Subscription to the *Articles*; which imply, that they do not believe those *Articles.* (1.) Some pretend to subscribe them as *Articles*, which, tho' in Part erroneous, they oblige themselves not to contradict. (2.) Some pretend to subscribe them in any Sense, wherein they can understand them according to the Rules of Grammar. (3.) Some pretend to subscribe them in any Sense, wherein they can reconcile them to Scripture. (4.) And others chuse the Sense, they pretend to subscribe them in, out of the several Senses they suppose intended to be held forth by the same *Articles.* And I wish more of them pretended to subscribe them honestly and fairly, *viz.* in the Sense really

126 *The Independent Whig.*

really intended by the Imposers, who, to *prevent Diversity of Opinions*, impose their own Sense, as *agreeable to Scripture*; and therefore cannot be supposed to have intended, that the *Articles* should differ from all other Writings, which all Readers endeavour to understand in the one Meaning intended by the Authors. Nay, to subscribe the *Articles* without believing them, is so reputable among the High-Church Priests, that a fair Subscriber, that is, one who subscribes in the one Sense he supposes originally intended, passes amongst them for the worst of Men, *viz.* a *Presbyterian*, and an Enemy to the Church.

4. Fourthly, Every Clergyman instituted into any Benefice, *swears, That he has made no simoniacal Payment, Contract or Promise, directly or indirectly, by himself, or by any other, to his Knowledge, or with his Consent, to any Person or Persons whatsoever, for or concerning the procuring and obtaining of his Ecclesiastical Dignity, Place, Preferment, Office or Living,* (respectively and particularly naming the same whereunto he is to be admitted, instituted, collated, install'd, or confirm'd) *nor will at any Time hereafter perform or satisfy any such kind of Payment, Contract or Promise, made by any other, without his Knowledge or Consent: So help him God, thro' JESUS CHRIST.* Now, whether any of them break this Oath, I leave to the Consideration of the Reader, who ought to

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esteem

esteem all Clergymen taking it guilty, that either make Presents to any Body, or Marry, or compound with the Patron about Tythes, in order to get the Benefice; no less than those who, by Bargain, pay Money before or after the Benefice is procur'd, are guilty.

5. Fifthly, An Oath of Allegiance to his Majesty King *GEORGE* is taken by all Benefic'd Clergymen; who may be justly deem'd perjur'd, if they do not pay the same Regard to his Majesty, which they pretend to have been due to King *CHARLES* the First, or Second; or to Queen *ANNE*, at the Beginning and latter End of her Reign. The Popularity and Credit, to which this Perjury intitles the High-Church Clergy among one another, and the Disgrace attending those who are faithful to the Oaths they have taken, (the former being dubb'd by them *Honest Men*, and good Churchmen, for breaking their Oaths; and the latter *Rogues* and Betrayers of the Church, for keeping them;) leaves us no Room to doubt, that the Perjured of this Kind are but too numerous. However, I am willing to think it would be Injustice to say, that many Laymen need not go out of their own Parishes, to find one at least, and often more, where there are Lecturers and Curates.

The Difficulty therefore mention'd in the Beginning of this Paper, admits of a plain Solution; and it is as easy to conceive, that

that Men, who begin the World in this Manner, should exceed others in Wickedness; who either begin the World innocently, or are under no Necessity to begin it wickedly; as it is to conceive, that Butchers and Soldiers should be less Humane than others, or that young Women, once prostituted, should lose all Modesty.

NUMBER XVIII.

Wednesday, May 18. 1720.

A general Idea of Priestcraft.



Have, in my Eighth and other Papers, vindicated the Almighty from the Imputation of Obscurity in revealing his Will to Mankind; and shewn, that he is plain, exact, and even circumstantial, when he delivers his Precepts to them. I shall now expose the contrary Proceedings of weak and corrupt Men; by giving a general Idea of the principal Arts, by which the designing Priests of all Religions

ons have kept their Craft and Impostures from a Discovery, and made the Truth, as far as they could, inaccessible.

Every mad Action, or Principle, in Religion and Government, must have some appearing Cause assign'd for it, proper to make the People stare, and to hide the true one. Mankind, as tame as Priests and Tyrants have made them, will not be content to be deceiv'd or butcher'd, without having a Reason for it. The Pope, who assumes a Power to judge for all Men, and devotes whole Nations to Damnation and Massacre, and sends People to Heaven or Hell in Colonies, just as their Money or Disobedience determines him, acts a very consistent Part in tying the Keys of both Worlds to his Girdle, and in stiling himself God's absolute *Vicar General*. These are *his* Reasons; and the Catholick and more Orthodox Parts of *Europe* are well content with them.

In former Reigns, when many of our *English* Clergy thought fit to tye us Hand and Foot, and deliver us over to our Kings, as their proper Goods and Chattels, to be fed or flay'd according to their *sacred* Will and Pleasure, they told us, it was the Ordinance of God, that one Man might glut his Lust, or his Cruelty, with the Destruction of Millions, and if we kept out of Harm's Way, we were assuredly damned. And These were *their* Reasons then. Of late, it is true, many of them have changed their Doctrine

130 *The Independent Whig.*

and their Behaviour. We are, it seems, *at present*, living in the Guilt of Rebellion, which is a damnable Sin; and so we are to rebel upon Pain of Damnation, to free ourselves from the Damnation which follows Rebellion. These are their Reasons *now*.

Formerly, when some certain Persons were content to be Protestants, the Church of *Rome* was the *Spiritual Babylon*, and the *Scarlet Whore*, and *Sodom*; and the *Pope* was *Anti-Christ*; for he sat in the Temple of God, and exalted himself above all that is called God. But this was Truth, and could not hold long, considering into whose Hands it was fallen; and therefore in a little Time, when they had a Mind to get into the Pope's Place, and to do and say as he did, the Church of *Rome* became all of a sudden a *true Church*, and an *old Church*, and our *Mother Church*. In short, the *old withered Harlot and Mother of Whoredoms* grew a great Beauty, and her *Daughter* here in *England* resembled her *Mamma* more and more every Day she lived, and gave the foregoing Reasons for it.

From hence it is plain, that tho' for every Imposture some Cause must be assigned, yet a very indifferent one will serve the Turn. The Gross of the World are dull and credulous: Few make any Enquiries at all, and fewer make successful ones. It is, however, still best if the Cheat stands upon such a

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The Independent Whig. 131

Foundation, that it cannot be searched nor examined by any *Human Eye*.

When *Numa Pompilius* told the *Romans*, that he conversed familiarly with the Nymph *Egeria*; which of them could pay her a Visit, and ask her whether the Prince and she were in Earnest such very good Neighbours? And when *Mahomet* took such a wide Range thro' the other World, upon his Nag *Elborach*, and told Wonders at his Return; there was neither Man nor Horse in all *Arabia*, that could take the same Journey to disprove him: Or, when he was pleased to be thought conversant with the Angel *Gabriel*, I do not hear that ever the Angel signed a Certificate that they were no wise acquainted. The Quack, who had found out the true *Fern Seed* and the *Green Dragon*, thought it, no doubt, a hard Matter to prove him a Lyar.

In the Heathen Temples of old, neither the *Sybils*, nor any other Priests or Belchers of Prophecy, Male or Female, were answerable for the Oracles and dark Sayings they utter'd. They had what they said from God, who never once contradicted them. It was impossible to come at him for personal Information; and a very profane Crime not to believe his Priest; and to distrust the Deity himself, was *almost* as bad: You had nothing to do but to *captivate your Reason to your Faith*, and swallow the *Verbum Sacerdotis*. If you did not, the Judgment of the God,

that is, the Anger of his Priest was sure to pursue you.

The same Policy has been ever practis'd by the Deluders of Mankind in all Names and Shapes. They have always entrench'd themselves behind the Ramparts of Mystery, Uncertainties and Terrors. The *Romish* Clergy maintain all their Pretensions and Power by Doctrines, which are calculated to make the People either wonder or tremble. And when a Man has lost his Courage and his Understanding, you may easily cheat or terrify him into as tractable an Animal as the Creation affords. The Doctrines of Purgatory, and of the Priests Power to forgive or damn, are alone strong enough to frighten most Folks into what Liberality and Submission the Church thinks fit to demand of them. And we all know that she is not over-modest upon such Occasions. *Bring me all thou hast, and follow me*, is her Stile.

I wish I could keep these Impostures and wild Claims altogether out of *England*, and confine them to Popish and Infidel Countries only. But that which is obvious and avowed cannot be hid. Very many of our High Jacobite Clergy aim at Dominion by the same wicked Means, and hood-wink and alarm us all they can. They lead us out of the Road of Reason, and play their Engines in the Dark; and all the Illumination we can get from them is, that we are all in a Mist. Without their Guidance we go astray,
and

and with it we go blindfold. All their Arguments are fetched from their own Authority. Their Assertions are no less than Rules and Laws to us; and where they lead we must follow, tho' into Darknefs and Servitude. If we grow wilful, and break loose from our Orthodox Ignorance, we are pursued with hard Names and Curses. Doubting is Infidelity, and Reason is Atheism. What can we do in this Case? There is no Medium between a Blockhead and a Schismatick; if we follow them blindly, we are the First; and the Second, if we leave them. We want Faith, if we will not take their Word; and we want Eyes, if we do.

They indeed give a Sugar-Plumb, and refer us to the Bible for Proof of all that they say. But, in Truth, this Privilege, if we examine it, will appear None at all; but, on the contrary, an errant Bite, and gross Mockery. For when they have sent us to a Text, will they allow us to construe it our own Way? No such Matter: They have nailed a Meaning to it, and will permit it to bear no other. You may read, provided you read with *their Spectacles*; and examine their Propositions *freely*, provided you take them every one for granted. You may exert your Reason fully, but be sure let it be to no Purpose; and use your Understanding independently, under their absolute Direction and Controul. I wonder how these Men could ever have the Front to accuse the

Church of *Rome* for locking up the Bible in an unknown Tongue !

The eternal War that they wage against Reason, which they use just as they do Scripture, is founded upon good Policy ; but it is pleasant to observe their Manner of attacking it. They reason against Reason, use Reason against the Use of Reason, and shew, from very good Reason, that Reason is good for nothing. When they think it on their own Side, then they apply all its Aids to convince or confound those who dare to think without their Concurrence : Therefore, in their Controversies about Religion, they frequently appeal to Reason ; but we must not accept the Appeal, for if our Reason be not their Reason, it is no Reason. They use it, or the Appearance of it, against all Men ; but no Man must use it against them. As there is no such Thing as arguing and perswading without the Assistance of Reason, it is a little absurd, if not ungrateful, in these Gentlemen, to decry it at the same Time that they are employing it ; to turn the Batteries of Reason against Reason, and make it self destroy it self.

Neither Scripture, therefore, nor Reason, by these Rules signifies any Thing till the Priests have explain'd them, and made them signify something ; and the Word of God is not the Word of God, till they have declared its Sense, and made it so. Thus, by the Time that Scripture and Reason have been modelled,

modelled, and qualified, and cooked up by the High-Church Jacobite Clergy, they are neither Scripture nor Reason; but a perfect *French Dish*, or what the Spiritual Cooks please; an Oleo or Hodg-Podge of Nonsense, Jargon and Authority.

From all that has been said, the following Conclusions may be drawn: Such Clergymen as I have been above describing, prove every Thing by asserting it, and make any Pretence support any Claim. They build Systems upon pretended Facts, and argue from Propositions which are either highly improbable, or certainly false. When they cannot convince, they confound us; and when they cannot persuade, they terrify. We have but Two Ways to try the Truth of their Doctrines, and the Validity of their Demands, namely, *Reason* and *Revelation*; and they deprive us of Both, by making the One dark, and the Other dangerous.


What a Contempt must this Tribe have for Mankind!



NUMBER XIX.

Wednesday, May 25. 1720.

Ecclesiastical Authority, as claim'd by
the High Clergy, an Enemy to Religion.

INCE there are so many different Opinions and Apprehensions in the World about Matters of Religion, and every Sect and Party does with so much Confidence pretend, that *they*, and *they only*, are in the Truth; the great Difficulty and Question is, by what Means Men may be secured from dangerous Errors and Mistakes in Religion? For this End some have thought it necessary, that there should be *an Infallible Church*, in the Communion whereof every Man may be secured from the Dangers of a wrong Belief: And others have thought it necessary, that their several *fallible Churches* should have *Authority in Matters of Faith*, in order to keep up

up a right Faith in the People of the Fundamentals of Religion.

But it seems God has not thought either necessary: If he had, he would have revealed himself more plainly in this Matter, than in any particular Point of Faith whatsoever. He would have told us expressly and in the plainest Words, that he had appointed *an Infallible Guide and Judge in Matters of Religion*, or *Men* who should have *Authority in Matters of Faith*; and would likewise have plainly mark'd out him or them, for Men to have had Recourse to on all Occasions; because our Belief depending on this *infallible Judge*, or on these *Men* who had *Authority*, we could not be safe from Mistake in particular Points, without so plain and clear a Revelation of this infallible Judge, or of these *Men* who had *Authority*, that there could be no Mistake about him or them; nor could there be an End of any other Controversies in Religion, unless this Matter of *an infallible Judge*, or of *Men* who had *Authority*, were out of our Controversy.

It is not pretended by any Advocates of *Infallibility* or *Authority*, that God has delivered the Matter expressly and plainly in the Scriptures. They proceed, and build only on Inferences and Deductions from thence: And the Papists are divided among themselves as to the Seat and Extent of *Infallibility*; as the *Protestant-Papists* are, in respect to the Seat and Extent of *Authority*. And
both

138 *The Independent Whig.*

both *Infallibility* and *Authority* are manifestly absurd Pretences in Point of Reason; tho' *Infallibility* seems less absurd than *Authority*. The Pretence of *Infallibility* is plainly absurd; because the *Infallible Church* gives constant and daily Proofs of its Fallibility: And the Pretence of *Authority* is absurd; because, that may lead Men into any Mistakes whatsoever. But, as I observed, *Infallibility* is less absurd; because that is of a Piece, and consistent with, and necessarily follows from *Authority*: Whereas *Authority* without *Infallibility*, supposes a *Power given Men by God* to lead the World into any Mistakes, and to subvert Christianity it self. But however this be, they are both sufficiently ridiculous; and it is ridiculous to send Men, in order to their Salvation, to believe either in the *Pope*, or *Dr. Swift*, or *Dr. Burges*, on whose Authority, if Men depend, they can only be *Papists*, or *Swiftites*, or *Burgesites*, and not Christians.

If then God has not provided an *infallible Judge*, nor any Men with *Authority* in Matters of Religion; there is some other Way, whereby Men may be secur'd against all dangerous Errors and Mistakes in Religion, and whereby they may discern all such Truths as are necessary to their Salvation. Now that way our Saviour has declared to us in these Words, *If any Man desire to do his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self: that is, if*

a Man has an honest and sincere Mind, and a hearty Desire to do the Will of God, he has the best Preservative against dangerous Mistakes in Matters of Religion; and God, or his Understanding, will enable him to distinguish sufficiently, whether Doctrines be of God or Men, and will conduct him into all necessary Truths.

This is a true and plain Answer to the Question proposed; and also true and plain Religion, or Christianity, if Men will be govern'd by *CHRIST*, the *Author and Finisher* thereof. This is easy to be known, and requires little Time to learn. This frees Men from all Concern about the intricate and endless Squabbles of Divines, disputing which of them are to have *Authority*, and wherein their own *Authority* consists; and ought to set them at Ease; for, as Christians, or Followers of *CHRIST*, they have nothing to do to enquire, what Priests are to have an Anti-christian Authority over one another and the Laity.

But notwithstanding the Plainness of the Case, it is no Wonder, that weak People now a Days should believe in Priests and not in Christ; should be Priestlings and not Christians; when, in our Blessed Saviour's own Time, the *Jews* were ready to believe in any Impostors, and averse to believing in him, as he himself tells us. *I am come, says he, in my Father's Name, and ye receive me not; if Another shall come in his own Name,*
him

• 140 *The Independent Whig.*

him ye will receive ; how can you believe, which receive Honour one of another ? That is, (to make a sort of Application to our present Times) “ you have the Bible among you, “ wherein I teach you in my Father’s Name, “ wherein I bid you search, examine, and “ try all Things for your selves, and to call “ no Man *Master* in Religion upon Earth : “ That Bible you reject, in not understanding it for your selves ; but if any Man “ set up for an Authoritative Interpreter of “ it, him you will receive for your *Master*, “ and call your selves after his Name. How “ can you be Believers in, and Followers “ of me, who believe upon the Authority “ of Men, and reject the Authority of “ God ?

Christianity, or Religion, thus truly understood, has too many Enemies to make it lost Labour to prove it true by Arguments. And therefore I observe, in Proof of our Saviour’s Doctrine, *That a hearty Desire and Endeavour to do the Will of God, is the best Preservative against dangerous Mistakes ;* First, that therein our Saviour recommends the best and most proper Disposition of Mind to qualify a Man to receive Truths from God, and to enable him to make a right Judgment as to what proceeds from God, and what from Men. For a good Man is most likely to have right Apprehensions of God and Divine Things. Secondly, such a Disposition in a Man supposes his Impartiality

The Independent Whig. 141

tiality in the Search of Truth ; that he has no Partiality to any particular Doctrine ; and that he is superior to the Temptations of any Passions, (which blind the Mind) and has no Reason to deceive himself by receiving Things without Evidence ; nor Inclination to reject what has Evidence. Thirdly, God will not suffer the best dispos'd Minds to fall into dangerous Mistakes ; but will, as he says himself, *guide them in Judgment, and shew them his Way.* Again, God says by SOLOMON, *If thou incline thine Ear unto Wisdom, and apply thy Heart to Understanding ; yea, if thou cryest after Knowledge, and liftest up thy Voice for Understanding, if thou seekest her as Silver, and searchest for her as for hid Treasure ; then shalt thou understand the Fear of the Lord, and find the Knowledge of God.* Indeed, the Bible is so plain, as to all necessary Truths, that he that runs may read ; and a Day-Labourer cannot fail of finding Truth, that searches it *there* ; and is in no Danger of failing, unless he delivers himself up absolutely to some *Guide* to interpret the Bible for him. Fourthly, and Lastly, living honestly, and seeking after Truth, are the best Things a Man can do, and the very Perfection of his Nature ; and by Consequence all that God, who is a good and reasonable Being, can require of him.

I shall conclude this Paper, which I have written in Behalf of Christianity, and against Antichristianism, with another Divine Saying

142 *The Independent Whig.*

ing of our Blessed Saviour: *He that speaketh of himself, seeks his own Glory; but he that seeks his Glory that sent him, the same is true, and no Unrighteousness is in him.* As if he had said, “ Hereby you may distinguish One
 “ that comes from God from an Impostor.
 “ If any Man *seeks* his own Glory and Au-
 “ *thority*, you may conclude, *God has not*
 “ *sent him*; but, whatever he pretends, that
 “ he *speaks of himself*, preaches himself, and
 “ from himself; but he that *seeks* the Honour
 “ of God, and not his own Interest, Advan-
 “ tage and Authority, by directing Men to the
 “ Authority of God alone, that Man has no
 “ Falshood, no Design to deceive; you may
 “ conclude him to be no Deceiver or Impo-
 “ stor.”



NUMBER XX.

Wednesday, June 1. 1720.

Of Chaplains.



S between the several Acts of the most grave and solemn Tragedies, it is allowed to divert the Company with a Dance or a Song; so in this Paper, I shall descend to entertain my Readers with a Dissertation upon *Chaplains*, who are a Sort of expensive Domesticks, which none but great Families can entertain. How or when this venerable Piece of Household-Stuff became first in Use, is not certainly determined, that I know of; but it is certain, that he is left entirely out of the Roll of Ecclesiastical Officers mentioned in the New Testament; his Use and Importance being not thought of, or forgot to be mentioned by *St. Paul*, though not by *Mr. Collier*, who has supplied the Omission of the Apostle, and discovered them.

144 *The Independent Whig.*

It is likely that *Chaplains* were first invented and brought into Fashion, in the dark and barbarous Ages ; and so Custom has continued what Ignorance began. To these Days of Darkness is owing the marvellous Encrease of lazy Monks and cheating Friars ; in which black Swarm of Reverend Idlers, probably, first crept in this *Supernumerary Levite*. It is well known, that worthless and designing Priests have always advanced and nourished Superstition, being very sensible that it would in return nourish and multiply *them*. Thus Priestcraft and Bigotry beget each other ; and being so near a-Kin, perpetually maintain the mutual Relation.

The Office of a *Chaplain* is, according to Mr. *Collier*, to Pray for, Bless, and give Absolution to those he is concerned for — “ All “ which, *says he*, are Acts of Authority and “ Jurisdiction.” If *this* last Assertion be true, it is enough to destroy all Charity ; since at this rate of Reasoning, I ought to be afraid of throwing a Farthing to an Alms-woman, lest she would be thereby provoked to Pray for and Bless me, and by that Means acquire Jurisdiction over me. And who would not rather deny his Charity, than give away his Liberty ?

To shew that Mr. *Collier* is very much in earnest in bestowing this same Authority upon this his *Domestick Parson*, he puts a Rod in his Hand against the Master of the Family himself, whom, it seems, it is his Right to counsel,

counsel, exhort and reprove; which Offices, he says, are “inconsistent with the Condition “ of a Servant.” The Chaplain therefore is in the first Place a much Wiser Man, as well as a more Holy, than my Lord is; and in the second Place, it is his Duty to owe my Lord no Duty at all in the Capacity of a Servant to a Superior.

After he has put the Clergy in “joint Commission with the Angels themselves,” as he says God has done, it is no Wonder that he will not allow the meanest of them to be any Man’s Servant, how great soever. He therefore reasons against the 13th of *Henry VIII.* because it calls the *Patrons of Chaplains their Masters*. If some of them “formerly “ were Stewards and Clerks of the Kitchen “ to People of Distinction,” as he says *Bishop Latimer* complains some of them were forced to be in his Time; I cannot see for all that how they could, according to *Mr. Collier*, suffer by it in their Dignity and Reputations; because, for as good Reasons as before, their gathering the Rent and going to Market for Provision, might give them *Jurisdiction* over the Person who employed them. I cannot therefore join with some of the *Criticks* in censuring the Author of the *Scornful Lady*, for dispatching *Parson Roger* in a Morning, with his Basket under his Arm, to scour the Roosts and gather Eggs; the same being a primitive Branch of his Office, if we may believe the aforesaid Bishop.

146 *The Independent Whig.*

But though “ People misapprehending the
 “ Priest’s Office, entertain a *Chaplain* upon
 “ the same Account they do their Footmen,
 “ only to garnish the Table and stuff out the
 “ Figure of the Family”; (*Collier’s Essays*,
 “ part 1. p. 204, 205.) yet “ for a Patron to
 “ account such a *Consecrated Person* his Priest,
 “ as if he belonged to him as a Servant, is,
 “ in effect, to challenge divine Honours, and
 “ to set himself up for a God, (p. 207.) Mr.
Leslie puts the same Thing stronger, in fewer
 Words, and will not suffer any Man (Prince
 or Subject) to say, *my Parson*, or *my Chap-*
lain, in any other Sense than we say, *my King*
 or *my God*.

So that, in the Sentiments of these Reverend Gentlemen, every one who hires a Chaplain, hires a Master. Take Warning then, O ye rich Men, Nobles, and Princes of the Earth; and due Submission and Allegiance pay unto these your *Spiritual Sovereigns*, whom you have taken into your Service to be your *Superiors*; and to whom you give *Bread* and *Wages* to exercise DOMINION over you.

After all, Mr. *Collier* is so good as to allow
 “ the Master of the Family, in the Ab-
 “ sence of the Priest, to supply his Place, as
 “ far as *lawfully he may*, that is, in Praying
 “ and giving Thanks at Meat,” (p. 200.) But
 he must not Pray to God to Bless his Family,
 and to forgive them their Sins; for this would
 be to *Usurp* the *Authority* of his Lord, the
Chaplain.

Before

The Independent Whig. 147

Before I have done with Mr. *Collier*, I would ask him one Question, and that is, Whether the Chaplains of Bishops are of the same superior Importance and Authority with the Chaplains of Laymen; because the Bishops themselves are qualified to be their own Chaplains; if the saying of Domestick Prayers, and Blessing their own Table, is allowed by him to be consistent with their Ecclesiastical Dignity?

Milton, though otherwise a Man of great Parts and Merit, yet wanting either the Sense or the Grace to see the Usefulness and Excellency of these adopted Sovereigns, speaks of them with too much Contempt. He says, that "in State perhaps they may be listed
" among the upper serving Men of some
" great Household, and be admitted to some
" such Place as may stile them the Sewers or
" the Yeomen Ushers of Devotion, where the
" Master is too resty, or too rich, to say his
" own Prayers, or to Bless his own Table."
" (*Vol. 2. of his Works in Folio, p. 509.*)

But this was the Case only in his Time, for a *Chaplain* now a Days is looked upon as a more honourable Piece of Furniture. After a Coach and Six, the next Trappings of Domestick Grandeur, are a Page, Plate, and a Parson. He swells the Household Pomp and Luxury, and is often taken for Pride more than Prayers. Formerly, his Appetite was uncourteously restrained; he was only permitted to Riot in Roast Beef; and Sir *Scrape*

148 *The Independent Whig.*

and the first Course were removed together. But now he has better Luck, having, for the most part, obtained a general Toleration for Custard.

Nor are the Times mended with Mr. *Chaplain* in one Instance only : In Days of Yore he was humbly content with *Abigail*, and my Lady's Woman was thought a suitable Match for the *Household Priest*, (as Mr. *Collier* Christens him) but *now* he does not make *that use* of her, but leaves her, and flies at higher Game. If my Lady is single, the Doctor has a Chance for making his Fortune ; and when he cannot marry her, he can some times sell her : of which I could give Instances, but for the regard which I bear to the *Quality* and the *Priesthood*. If my Lady be already married, he has still Happiness and good Fortune in his Eye, provided she be but Young ; and even though she is Old, provided she be Superstitious and Bigotted : So that whether her Person is agreeable, or her Understanding crazy, he has his Ends ; for he has a *Parson's Barn*, and nothing comes amiss.

It must be owned farther, that a *Chaplain* in a Great Family is a useful Body for most Purposes, except that of his Function: He is often a facetious Person, and his Jokes and Puns keep the upper Part of the Family in a good Mood ; for, as to the *Inferior*, he deigns not to speak to them, unless to insult them, and thereby teach them the great Respect which they owe him. He moreover graciously condescends

descends to pry into all the Actions and Behaviour of the Servants, by which he keeps them in Obedience and Fear, at least of himself.

Scire volunt secreta domûs atque inde timeri.

Besides, he is so courteous, that he meddles with all Family Affairs, unasked; and interposes with his Counsel and Authority, unthanked. From hence it comes, that he and the Steward can never agree: For the Steward (like a sawcy Layman, as he is) will be pretending to know his own Business as well as Mr. *Chaplain*, who is a *Consecrated Person*. The Family is therefore eternally divided into Two Factions between them; but the *Doctor* has the Secret of securing the Women on his Side, and so always gets the Better.

The Doctor is likewise a considerable Person for divers other Arts and Accomplishments. He throws a Bowl with more Skill, and follows it with more Activity, than any Man (not in Orders) upon the Green. He is also a trusty Toper in the Family: He has an uncommon Palate in the Discernment of Liquors, and an uncommon Zeal for their Consumption. Nor is his great Dexterity at Whisk of trivial Moment: His Talent in this Branch of his Duty is so signal, that my Lady seldom fails chusing, or rather requiring him for her own Partner, if he is not already snapped up by the Daughter for her's.

After all this, who can wonder that our *Houſhold Priest* holds up his Head, and adores himſelf? He is an hourly Witneſs of his own Importance and Figure; and finding himſelf an extraordinary Body, it is nothing ſtrange that he demands extraordinary Treatment. As little to be admired is the Erectneſs of his Mien, and the dignified Primneſs of his Manner; how elſe ſhould he be himſelf, and differ from all other Men? His Authority and the Cuſtom of the Cloth give him a Right to Contradiſtion; and if he loves State and *pompam aulicam*, what Layman does not? If he hates to ſee a Brother peeping through Timber, or wrigling in a String, who can blame the Workings of Self-love? If the *German Princes* are under his Diſpleaſure for ſacrilegioſly admitting their Pages to ſay Grace; ſo are all they who make bold to cut their own Corns, under the Frowns of that famous Artiſt *Don Saltero* of *Chelſea*.

To conclude with a grave Paragraph; I am afraid it too often happens, that this ſame *Houſhold Priest*, who is taken into a Family to Sanctify it, proves a Diſturber of its Reſpoſe, and a Foe to its Welfare. He is a Spy upon the Wealthy and the Great, for the ill Ends of his Order. If he has the Ear of his Patron, he can, by alarming his Conſcience, or ſtroaking his Vanity, influence him to turn the Patrimony of his Children into a Gift to the Altar; and ſo a Family of Innocents are ſtraitned, or ruined, to enlarge the Pride and
Income

Income of a worthless Vicar, ot to rear up a graceless Mob, for the Interest and Support of Priestcraft and Slavery. So that the Publick it self suffers in no small Degree from the Malignant Influence which designing *Chaplains* have in Great Houses. How many Noble Families are by them inflamed with an unso- cial Bitterness of Spirit against all those, who inoffensively think for themselves; and are tainted with the vile Principles of Vassalage to any Authority, *Civil* or *Sacred*, which these their Spiritual Governors shall plead for ?

P. S. This Paper being intended to expose the ridiculous Privileges claimed in Behalf of Chaplains, as if they were of Divine Institution; and the ill Use they make of their Influence over weak Minds: Nothing here said is meant against any Gentleman's taking into his Family a pious and agreeable Clergyman, under the Title of a Chaplain; who, if he possesses an honest and beneficent Heart, with Affability and good Breeding, is, no doubt, an amiable Character. But as to those little, four, un- bred Bigots, whom I have frequently seen in that Station, I do not think they ought to be admitted into the Conversation of Gentle- men, or suffered to have any Concern either with their Children or Servants.

NUMBER XXI.

*Wednesday, June 8. 1720.**A Comparifon between the High Church
and the Quakers.*

THE Clergy of our National Church are Spiritual Officers *appointed* by Order of the Civil Magistrate (like Church-Wardens, Overseers of the Poor, Constables, and other Parish Officers) to act according to his *Law*, which is their Rule, and which has interpreted the Bible for them in the Thirty-Nine *Articles*, Homilies, Liturgy, Canons, Injunctions, and other Institutions. The chief Design of their *Appointment* is to instruct Men in Religion and Morality, or to make Men *wiser* and *better* than they would be without their Assistance. To that End they are *hir'd*, and paid a great Revenue, which, by the Means of Lands, Tythes, Rents, Salaries, Fees, and Per-

The Independent Whig. 153

Perquisites, is suppos'd to amount to Two Millions *per Annum*; wherein they greatly differ from the aforesaid Parish-Officers, who perform many real Services to Society without any particular Reward, as is, in many Cases, the certain Duty, which Men of the same Society owe to one another. But as making Men *wise* and *good* are the very best Things which can be done for them, both in Relation to their Condition in this World and the next: So every Man ought to think this Revenue *well bestow'd*, if Men are made more *wise* and *good* in any Proportion to the Charge; and on the other side *ill bestow'd*, if Men are not in the least improv'd in Knowledge and Virtue; much more, if they are render'd *more ignorant* and *worse* by the Teaching and Influence of their Guides.

We are justly concern'd how we part with our Money in other Cases, how it is laid out and managed, and whether what we receive in Lieu of it be worth our Money, especially when the Sum is considerable. It is therefore of great Importance to us to consider the State of this Affair, wherein so much is expended; that, in Case the Clergy do not answer the Ends of their Calling, and not deserve their Revenues, we may take proper Measures to make them do so; for it is in the Power of us of the Laity, who almost wholly chuse and constitute the Legislature, to make the Clergy useful, and it is either thro' our Ignorance, or Knavery, or Both, if we do not make them useful.

Now

154 *The Independent Whig.*

Now it seems to me, that the Toleration or Liberty of Conscience granted by Law in *England*, gives us an Opportunity of examining this Matter, beyond what can be done in *Popish* or other Countries, where no such Toleration is allow'd. We have a numerous Sect, or People among us, distinguish'd by the Name of *Quakers*, who have no Spiritual Officers, with any Wages, Hire, or Salary, whose peculiar Business it is to Teach; but every Man among them does freely of himself, and *gratis*, communicate his Knowledge, both publickly and privately, according to his Ability, whenever he judges it proper so to do: And therefore we may easily make a Comparifon in the Case, between the Wisdom and Virtue of the common People of the National Church, and the Wisdom and Virtue of the *Quakers*, (who have no Quality or Gentry among them, but consist of Tradesmen, Artificers, Farmers, Servants, and Labourers) and thereby make a just Judgment, whether the Two Millions *per Annum* are *well* or *ill* bestow'd.

I. No Man will deny, but the *Quakers* are born with the same natural Parts as the Churchmen. It will also be manifest, that they improve their natural Parts by the Knowledge of what the Clergy esteem the most important and sublime Points of Religion, under their general, diffus'd, *unhir'd* Ministry; equally at least with the Members of the Church, under the Direction of their Clergy, *hir'd* for Wages; for by free Conversation with both

The Independent Whig. 155

both Sorts, you will find that the *Quakers* understand as well the Nature and Attributes of God, the Doctrines of the Trinity in Unity, the Satisfaction, the Incarnation of God, and other such Points, and express themselves as clearly about them as Churchmen; and I presume this Matter will appear so clear as not to admit of the least doubt. I do confess, the *Quakers* have some *Errors*, (for what Man is or can be free from Error?) But as to those Errors, I think two Things may be offer'd in Excuse of them.

First, I observe in general with the most ingenious and Reverend Mr. NORRIS, (in his *Two Treatises of Divine Light*. 2d Tract, p. 32.) who says, *that he cannot think Quakerism inconsiderable, as the Principles of it are laid down and manag'd by Mr. BARCLAY. That great and general Contempt they lie under, does not hinder him from thinking the Sect of the Quakers to be far the most considerable of any that divide from the Church, in Case the Quakerism that is generally held be the same with that which Mr. BARCLAY has deliver'd to the World for such; whom he takes to be so great a Man, that he professes freely that he had rather engage against an Hundred BELLARMINES, HARDINGS, and STAPLETONS, than with One BARCLAY.*

Secondly, I observe, that the *Quakers* seem very excusable in respect to several of the Errors wherewith they are charg'd; and that their Neighbours, if they would do as they desire to be done unto, may justly pardon them.

156 *The Independent Whig.*

them. For as to their Opinions about Tythes, and paying Wages to Clergy, (which are deem'd fundamental Errors, and judged by the Clergy in their Books against the *Quakers* to be a sort of *Atheism*) they have it to say in their Excuse, that *Tythes*, which were a Part of the ritual Law of the *Jews*, are as such abolish'd under the Gospel, which has repeal'd the whole ritual Law. It seems also strange to them, that *Ambassadors*, (as the Clergy pretend to be) or *Negociators*, should claim Money from those to whom they are sent; that it appears more strange that the Clergy, who pretend to be Successors in Ambassadorship to *Christ* and his Apostles, should claim Tythes or Money, and thereby suppose our Blessed Saviour himself and his Apostles to have begun that Claim: Therefore they alledge, that if the Clergy are only voluntary Ambassadors or Negociators, they ought to bear their own Charges; and if only *Ministers* or Servants, they should be paid their Wages by those who *hire* them, and not claim an independent Maintenance; and herein they pretend to follow the Primitive Christians, *who* (according to the Reverend and Learned Dr. REEVES, in his *Apologies*, &c. Vol. I. p. 44.) *would not pay Taxes for the Maintenance of the Heathen Temples*: And indeed, there is no Colour to make Tythes due *Jure Divino*, that Point being fully determined on the Side of the *Quakers*, by that accomplish'd Scholar and Divine, Dr. *Prideaux*,

The Independent Whig. 157

deaux, in his *Original and Right of Tythes*; and besides, it is a Matter of Contest among the Clergy, to which sort of them an independent Maintenance does by Divine Right belong.

As to the *Quakers* Doctrines of Passive Obedience, or taking patiently all manner of Affronts and Injuries, and refusing to bear Arms on any Occasion; it is known, that herein they follow St. JUSTIN MARTYR, ORIGEN, TERTULLIAN, St. CYPRIAN, LACTANTIUS, St. BASIL, SALVIAN, and others the most Learned and Ancient of the Primitive Fathers.

And as to their Principle of *not Swearing at all*, they follow *the Fathers of the Five First Centuries*, who (according to the most Learned Dr. WHITBY, in *Dissert. de Script. Interp.* p. 164.) *all agreed, that Oaths of all Kinds were Unlawful to Christians*; those Fathers understanding our Saviour's Words, *Swear not at all*, universally; which, indeed, seem suited to the Notion, as they were the very Language, of the *Essenes*, a Sect of *Jews* in our Saviour's Time, who maintain'd all Oaths to be Unlawful.

It will be difficult to find one *Quaker* that cannot read, unless he has been educated and bred up in the Church, and became a Convert to *Quakerism*. Whereas, I will venture to affirm, that Half the Common People of the Church, especially in the Country, cannot read a Word.

158 *The Independent Whig.*

The *Quakers* are great Readers of the Bible; and it is their Principle to endeavour to *make the Best* of that Divine Book; which, tho' containing infinite Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, yet, as it is a perfect Rule of Faith to the whole World, is a plain and most intelligible Book, and must naturally improve the *Quakers*, more than it does those Churchmen, who either cannot read, or do not read the Bible at all, or not so much as the *Quakers*; or that think they are *not to make the Best of their Bibles without any Restraint*. I dare to be so unfashionable as to assert, that the Bible may, and will, improve the Readers thereof; notwithstanding Dr. SOUTH says of a Part of that Holy Book, that it *either finds Men mad or makes them so*; and that Dr. REEVES, in Derogation of its Divine Precepts, thinks fit to suppose, that *Quakers*, by reading the Bible, become *stark Bible-mad*. (*Preface to Apologies, &c. p. 11.*)

But there is one Point wherein the *Quakers* greatly exceed the Churchmen in Understanding, and whereof the Meanest among them is firmly perswaded; and that is, that *Every Man is to judge for himself in Matters of Religion*. Whereas few Churchmen are clear, as Men, Christians, and Protestants, ought to be, in this Matter; which is the Foundation of all good Sense, Christianity, and our glorious Reformation from the *Worst Priestcraft, POPERY*. This Principle naturally produces Knowledge: For the Use of the Understanding

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ing improves the Faculty; as delivering up the Understanding to Priests or Guides, sinks and debases it. And accordingly the *Quakers* reason and act very nicely in their Affairs, as a Politick Body, in Relation to Marriage, Orphans, Care of their Poor, &c. and Particulars among them understand Trade, and the Business of the World, and how to live in it, as well as any Men whatsoever.

2. As to the Comparison, which are the *Best* Men, *Quakers* or Churchmen; I suppose, it will not be deny'd, but that the *Quakers* are as good Men; as good in their Families; as good Neighbours; as Quiet, Temperate, Chaste, Sober, Free from Passion, Industrious; as clear from the gross Crimes which fill the Goals, and expose Men to the Pillory and Hanging; as Charitable in their Sentiments to those who differ from them; as great Enemies to Persecution; as true to Liberty and Property as any Churchmen; and, in fine, as good Subjects, and as Loyal to King *GEORGE*, (tho' Loyalty be the distinguishing Principle and Glory of our Church,) as any professed Follower of Dr. *SACHEVEREL*, *LUKE MILBOURNE*, or other swearing loyal Divine.

Since, therefore, it is undeniably evident, that the *Quakers* are at least as *wise* and as *good*, *without* any Charge to the Publick, as Churchmen are *with it*; I conceive it is incumbent on every One, who does not envy the Clergy their Preferments, to endeavour
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to find out some other Way to make them as useful as possible to Mankind, and to put them upon such an Establishment as may enable them to deserve all their Power and Riches; which shall be the Subject of some future Papers.

N U M B E R X X I I .

Wednesday, June 15. 1720.

Priestcraft corrupts every thing, and perverts the Use of Words.



P O E T S tell us, that *Midas* changed every Thing he touch'd into Gold, and *Medusa's* Head every one who saw it into Stone; but Priestcraft is yet of a more mischievous Nature, for That converts all who come within its Influence into Idiots or Lunaticks; and every Vertue or good Quality of the Mind into Nonsense or Roguery.

Every Creature and Plant assimilate the Food or Nourishment they receive into their
own

own Substance: The Toad converts into Poyson the same Juices, of which the Bee makes Honey: The same Breath blown into different Instruments, makes good or harsh Musick; it is no wonder therefore if that which is all Corruption it self, should corrupt and spoil every Thing else which touches or comes near it.

It has so mangled and perverted the Signification of Words, and the Nature of Things, that Language is rendered useles, or rather a Snare to Mankind: There is scarce a Sound or an Action, which has received the Stamp of a general Approbation, that has not lost its Meaning; and is stript of all Honesty to become Orthodox, and be made free of the *sacred Society*, as the *Popish* Priests are pleased to call themselves.

A becoming Zeal for the Glory of God, which ought to be a fervent Disposition of Mind to promote Holiness and Virtue amongst Men, by Softness, Perswasion, and Example, is now nothing but Party Rage, an implacable and furious Hatred, and the Denunciation of Woe and mortal War against all, who do not believe just the same with us, and cut their Corns as we do: Moderation is become a Vice, and esteemed to be Lukewarmeness, and an Indifference to Religion and Goodness.

An obstinate Bent of Mind, and a determinate Resolution to adhere to Opinions, the Truth of which we have never examined,

never intend to examine, and for the most part, are not able to understand if we did, is what is call'd Constancy in the Faith; and to burn our selves, or to fight with our best Friends till we can burn them, passes for Heroick and Christian Courage.

We must shut out the Sun at Noon in a Summer's Day, to make use of Candle-Light; and give up all our Senses to submit to frail Authority. We are to believe every Thing in exact Proportion as we cannot understand it, or as it appears absurd; and allow that alone to be true Faith, which contradicts the first Principles of Science. Reason, which is the only Light God has given to Men, to distinguish Truth from Falshood, Virtue from Vice, Religion from Imposture, is decried; and the Use of it deemed impious and dangerous.

Persecution of our Fellow-Creatures, Fellow-Subjects and Fellow-Christians, for doing the best Action they are capable of doing, (which is worshipping God in the Manner they think to be most acceptable to him) is called serving the Almighty, and promoting his Religion. The ruining and destroying our Neighbours, (whom we are commanded to love as our selves) and cutting their Throats, is having Pity upon their poor Souls; and the acting against all the Dictates of Nature, and Precepts of the Gospel, is Christianity, and doing the Will of our Saviour.

The Independent Whig. 163

Enthusiasts, fanatical, melancholly, monkish, recluse and sequestred Persons, are esteemed *the Religious*; and are supposed to know the other World, in Proportion as they know little of this. Philosophers, and Men of Wit or sound Knowledge, are generally accused of Infidelity and Atheism: Nay, the cardinal Virtues themselves cannot escape; but without the Belief of certain fashionable Speculations, are accounted only *splendida Peccata*, and those who possess them are treated with Ignominy; and indeed, none are thought fit for Heaven by Gentlemen of this Cast, but such as no Man of common Sense would care to keep Company with upon Earth.

Celibacy is esteemed a Virtue in some Churches, and not discouraged in others; and the disobeying the great Dictates of Nature, and the positive Command of God, *to increase and multiply*, is miscalled Chastity; and the wasting our Time in running up and down from Church to Chappel, from Chappel to Church, to hear *Masses*, and idle Harangues, and being perfectly useless to Society, and good for no one Thing in the World, is called by the *Papish* Priests *Devotion* and *Godliness*; as if the Almighty could be any way served but by doing good to his Creatures.

Poornefs and Dejection of Mind, is called Meeknefs of Spirit; and a Readiness to submit to Injuries and Impositions, is Christian Humility; stifling our Senses, is Submission

164 *The Independent Whig.*

and Deference to Authority; and our best Searches, and most sincere Enquiries after Truth, are called the Desires of Novelty, and curious and forbidden Studies: The doubting of any Thing, which our Guides think it their Interest to tell us, or shewing the Weakness of their Arguments, is Scepticism, and renouncing the Faith; and a hearty Concern for the Honour of Almighty God, and the Good of Men, is often interpreted to be downright Atheism; and to communicate with our Christian Brethren, when we can do it with a good Conscience, is Hypocrisy; unless we do it too when we think it sinful.

An Attempt to oblige the Clergy to keep the Laws they have sworn to, and the Articles they have subscribed, is to oppose received Opinions, and *quieta movere*. An Endeavour to preserve our Legal Constitution, is Sedition, Faction, and being *given to change*; and a generous Love for all Mankind, and the Liberty of our Country, with a noble Resolution to venture Life, and all which is valuable here below for that glorious Cause, is Rebellion, and worse than the Sin of Witchcraft.

Wasting, macerating, and torturing our Bodies by Fasting and Penances, is sanctifying our Souls; and to reject and throw back the Benevolence and bountiful Gifts of indulgent Providence, is to shew and pay our grateful Acknowledgments to his Goodness; as if he gave us any Thing, not to use and enjoy

enjoy it ; but we were to accept these Blessings only in Trust for the Clergy, and so live poorly our selves, that they may riot in Luxury, Profusenefs and Pride : which they have seldom fail'd to do, when they have had the Means of doing it ; carnal Things being observ'd best to suit with spiritual Minds.

Playing Monkey Tricks at Church, passes amongst the Papists for the Worship of God ; and they go to ghostly Dancing Masters, to know how to accost Him fashionably : The failing in a Ceremony, the Omission of a Bow ; the not filing to the Right or Left readily, or not adjusting their Motions to the Tune and Time of the Organs ; are all dangerous Errors, and favour much of Heresy ; and the *worshipping God in Spirit and in Truth* only, is Disobedience to the Church, and little better, if not worse, than Atheism : The decking up, and dressing of Churches, and giving the Deity fine Cloaths, is Decency, and doing him Honour.

Consecration, which is the Appointment or Appropriation of Places, Persons, or inanimate Things, to be used only in the immediate Service of God, (and which may be so applied indifferently with any Ceremony, or with none at all) is turn'd by the *Romish* Priests into a sort of Incantation or spiritual Jugling : By virtue of a little Holy Water, looking towards the *East*, mumbling over a few cunning Words, certain Motions of the Hand and Head, and by the help of some

166 *The Independent Whig.*

Powder le Pimp, the said Places, Persons and Things become sacred, and the Holiness is transferred from the Minds of the Communicants to the Ground, the Waincoat, and the Carcass and Cloaths of the Priest; and so the Devotion due to Almighty God, is chang'd into a senseless Idolatry to as senseless Men and Idols.

Prayers are turn'd by them into Curses, and Sermons into Invectives and Libels: Benevolence and good Will towards Men, and even Charity it self, which is comprehensive of all the Vertues, and without which Faith and Hope signify nothing, and which is not confin'd to Persons, Nations, or Languages, to Sects nor Opinions, but ought to be as free as the Elements, and diffusive as the animal Creation, is chang'd into Faction, Partiality, and often Profuseness, to support a Party, and a Combination against all Mankind, who do not think and act as we do.

But no Parts of Speech have had so ill Fortune, as Scripture Language, and even amongst some Protestants: Appellatives, and the Names of Complex Ideas, are often left untranslated, that they may pass for real Beings, and signify whatever the Priests have Occasion for; and sometimes, where they have been translated, false or unfair Meanings have been assigned to them, and they have been made to convey a quite different Sense from what they import in Scripture: The Word *Ecclesia* or Assembly is translated *Church*,
which

The Independent Whig. 167

which *there* always signifies the *Christian People*, and in our Articles, is defined to be the *Congregation of the Faithful*, but is now generally us'd only for the Clergy; and the Word *Episcopus* (which in *English* is *Overseer*) is english'd *Bishop*; so that Women, and the ignorant Crowd, are fully satisfy'd that they have found in Scripture, a *Lord of Parliament*, and a *Diocesan Prelate*, with a Mitre upon his Head, and a Crozier in his Hand; and whenever they hear or read the Word *Presbyter*, they fancy they see a Parson beating his Cushion in a Pulpit, and believe him to be *Jure Divino*: Instances of this kind are endless.

Even Literature it self is perverted, and instead of being made to improve Mens natural Faculties, is used to extinguish or stifle the first Principles of Knowledge. Seminaries have been erected and endow'd to teach Men backward: The Youth at a very great Expence, learn to be Blockheads, and accomplish'd Dunces; and spend the first and most improvable Part of their Manhood to be finished in Folly. The Discovery of Printing, which brought about the Reformation, is used to destroy it; and, like the *Scotchman's* Monkey, is made to bite every one but him who has the sole Custody of the Machine.

Of all or most of these Heads, I shall treat separately, in order to undeceive Mankind, and to manumit them from the Frauds and

168 *The Independent Whig.*

Tyranny of *Popish* and popishly affected Clergymen; by shewing, that they *now do*, and *ever did*, make Use of all their Influence over the stupid and unhappy Laity, and of all the Power and Riches they have been ever trusted with, to drive Religion and Virtue from the Face of the Earth, and therefore have always endeavoured to turn the worst Things into the best, and the best into the worst.

One Drop of Priestcraft is enough to contaminate the Ocean.

N U M B E R X X I I I .

Wednesday, June 22. 1720.

Of Z E A L .



Do not know any Word, in any Language, which, next to the Word *Church*, has so much Wick- edness and Roguery, to answer for, as the Word *Zeal*. It is indeed an im- portant

portant and dreadful Monosyllable, which, when used with proper Gestures and Emphasis, can turn a Cut-Throat into a Saint, and a Mad-man into a Martyr. It can commit Bloodshed and Butchery, with innocent Hands; destroy Life and Property, with a good Conscience; and dispeople Nations with Applause.

True Zeal is a sincere and warm Concern for the Glory of God, and the Spiritual Welfare of Mankind. This Definition seems to me to take in every Idea which ought to be annexed to the Word *Zeal*; and shews it to be a Vertue full of Affection, Meekness, Humanity and Benevolence, and void of all Choller, Bitterness, Ill-will, and Severity. This is its Character; and whatever contradicts it, is not *Zeal*, but *Rage*.

Especial Care ought therefore to be taken, effectually to distinguish true Zeal from false, and the Thing from the Pretence of it. For, if it is not well grounded, it falls under the Apostle's Censure, of a *Zeal*, which is *not according to Knowledge*. Of the latter Sort, is that with which crafty Men infatuate the credulous Multitude, who take their Religion upon Trust, and their Faith and Zeal at second Hand. Their Godliness consists in Prejudices and a Set of Names. They hate Dissenters, because they do not come to Church, and because they are strict Observers of the Lord's-Day, and seek God without Book: And they are *zealous* for the Church; but if
you

you ask them what they mean by it, you will find it to be either the Organs, the Ring of Bells, or the Parson. They have a zealous Antipathy to a black Cloak, which is a certain Sign of a wrong Religion; and they have a doating Fondness for a black Gown, which is an infallible Mark of the true Church: They therefore abhor and insult the former, and honour and bow down to the latter. Which Temper and Behaviour in them are wonderful Demonstrations of the Spirit of the Gospel; and entitle them to the highest Favour and Approbation of their Spiritual Governours. At the Time when *Dr. Sacheverel* was suffering the Law for Sedition, I asked one of his Mob, who was stragling at some Distance from the rest, in *Lincoln's-Inn-Fields* (as they were proceeding to demolish *Daniel Burges's* Meeting-House) what provok'd him to so much Outrage against *Daniel*, and his Congregation? He answer'd; *Because they had murther'd King Charles the First*. I then asked him, What he knew concerning *King Charles the First*? Why, quoth he, *He was One of the Twelve Apostles; and Dr. Sacheverel is the best Friend he has in the World*. Here he swore a great Oath, and left me to pity the Ignorance and Phrenzy of the enchanted Crowd.

Ignorance is the Mother of this sort of *Zeal*, and Craft its Father: And as its Pedigree is vile, so is its Behaviour brutal and abominable: It is the Tool of Knavery and
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 Design,

Design, and operates by Folly, Wickedness and Force: It is a Mastiff uncoupled, and halloo'd at Conscience, Sobriety, and Peace; and set on to devour every good Quality, it self possessing none: It is roused by Lies, and animated by Liquor: It combats Truth with Curses, and Moderation with Blows. Its Courage is Madness, and it is bold thro' Blindness. It has never any Mercy upon others, and seldom upon it self. It takes the Word of its *Driver*; and mistakes Mischief for Merit, and his Word for God's. It is the most miserable of all Slaves; it is blind, and it is distracted; and its only Freedom is to act Outrages, and shed Blood. It is neither blessed with Enjoyment nor Rest. It boils with Anger; it burns with Envy; it is tortured with Hatred; it is worried by all the worst Passions. It is incapable of Happiness; and either deaf to Instruction, or undone by it; for the Moment it grows wiser, it dies.

How often do Ambition and Design work their own impious Ends, under the snug Disguise of sanctify'd *Zeal*! Men are never weary of being deluded with Sounds; and a pious Word, artfully prostituted, and devoutly pronounced, will at any Time lure them into the grossest Impostures, and push them on to commit the most inhuman Barbarities. Thus the Papists are first taught that the *Pope* is a *Vice-God*, and the Representative of *Jesus Christ*; and that his *Zeal* for his own

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Revenues and Dominions, is *Zeal* for *Christ* and his Church; and then it is an easy Matter to perswade these poor Slaves and Bubbles, to adopt such a Portion of the same *Zeal*, as will prompt them to poison, and murder, and plunder, and burn, all those unhappy Schismatics, who continue so, rather than abandon their Senses, their Humanity, their Charity, and the Fear of God; all which are destructive of the Character of a *Zealot*. And thus both Papists and Protestants, being perswaded by their Priests, that all who, either thro' Reason, or Grace, think differently from the said Priests, are in a State of Damnation; become further perswaded, that because they are to be damned, therefore they are to be undone; and so anticipate the Labour of the Devils, and add Misery to the miserable. By this Means, as *Satan* is the Almighty's Executioner, they make themselves *Satan's*; and such *Zeal* is at once the Instrument and Qualification of a *Dæmon*.

When I see a grave Doctor proudly urging upon his Hearers the *Divine Right* of *Episcopacy*, which is just of as much Importance to Mankind as the Divine Right of *Geography*; I see presently into the Heart of the Man, and would lay any Wager that he has a burning *Zeal* to succeed *St. Peter*, in the Divine Revenue and Lordship of some Human Diocese; or else courts some Bishop with great *Zeal* for his Lordship's Neice, or for a fat Benefice. And I cannot but own,
that

The Independent Whig. 173

that a Christian *Zeal* for a Thousand Pound a Year, or even for Two Hundred Pound a Year, or even for a rich Wife, gifted with a good Apostolick Fortune, is a very commendable and very prevailing sort of *Zeal*; but I cannot see that it equally affects the whole Congregation. Pray of what Moment is it to a harmless, well-meaning Flock of Sheep, whether their Shepherd is called *Pastor* or *Overseer*? Or, whether he has Twenty Pound a Year Wages, or Twenty times as much? Or, whether he is hir'd by the whole Village, or only by the Chief Man of the Village? Or, whether he wears a plain *Hat*, or a high *Crown'd Cap*? Or, whether he wears *Linnen* or *Woollen*? But it is of great Moment to them, whether he feeds them or starves them; or whether he defends or plunders them; or whether he utterly neglects them himself, or only leaves them to the Care and Command of his Dog; or whether he seeks their Safety and Happiness, or only their Flesh and their Fleeces.

But further; the Tempers of Men, being either naturally warm, or quickly made so, it is easy to mistake a hot Head for a devout Heart, and an angry Heart for a devout Zeal. But, alas, how different is the meek Spirit of the Gospel, from that Fury which is rais'd by strong Beer, or passionate Sermons! How little do Men consider, that the same Arteries do often beat with equal Vigour for a Punk as for the Church, and occasion
broken

broken Heads for the one as soon as for the other !

True Christian Divine *Zeal* is inspired by God Almighty, and comes attended with every other Christian Virtue, and subdues every unruly Passion. It is inseparable from Charity, the highest *Christian Grace*, and the chief Characteristick of a Christian ; that Charity, *which wisheth all Things, hopeth all Things ;* which forgives all Men, but hurts none. It neither burns nor imprisons Mens Bodies ; nor plunders their Goods, nor rails at their Persons, nor stirs up Mischief against them, nor marks them out for Damnation. It is not raised by cruel Language, nor encreas'd by Bottles of Brandy ; it is modest, it is merciful, it is temperate, it is discerning.

On the other Hand, there is not in the World a more cruel, debauch'd, or more ignorant Passion, than false *Zeal* : It is void of Pity, of Grace, of Knowledge, and of Charity ; it is outrageous ; it delights in Blood ; it commits Massacres, and murders *Innocents* ; it dispeoples Nations : Nothing can restrain it, neither Kindred nor good Qualities, nor Pity nor Tears : It usurps the Name of Religion, and destroys all Religion ; it commits Abomination in a Style of Devotion, and talks Blasphemy in the Name of the Lord. It prostitutes God's Authority to destroy God's Works ; and, in the Name of *Christ*, damns and destroys those whom Christ died to save.

The Independent Whig. 175

If People would but look a little into their own Hearts and Constitutions, they would too often find that their *Zeal* is only Anger, and that this hot Devotion resides altogether in the Blood. I have long observed that your Cholerick Fellows are your most zealous Fellows, and are always the warmest Churchmen; and that, amongst the Ladies, the most amorous are ever the greatest Bigots. He who is peevish at his Table, will be peevish in his Pulpit; and as highly offended at an ill Dinner, as at a Conventicle. I once caught a great fat Doctor at *St. Paul's*, cursing and storming against *Presbyterians*, whom he consigned in a Body over to Satan, with great Zeal, and no Remorse. Says I, to my self, *This reverend ill-tongu'd Parson will certainly quarrel, and kick, over his Claret as well as over his Cushion*: In order to try, I got into his Company at the *Baptist's-Head*, and by the Humility of my Behaviour, and the Divinity of the *Hermitage*, I sat at tolerable Ease with the Doctor, till the middle of the third Bottle, and then he swore at the Drawer for not answering before he was call'd; and, before it was out, he drank Confusion to *Fanatics*, and a Health to *Sorrel*. The Doctor then shew'd a violent Appetite for Quarrelling; but meeting no Body in the same Humour, he only eased himself in Oaths; till an honest Citizen drank to him the Glorious Memory of King *William*; which the Doctor pledged, by throwing a
wild

176 *The Independent Whig.*

wild Duck, just hot from the Spit, full in the Citizen's Face, and got up at the same Time to fall upon him with his Hands; but as soon as he got up he fell, and we left him upon the Floor, to the Care of the Drawers.

How long are Mankind to be deluded with Sounds; and how long will Uncharitableness and Outrage, which are Enemies to the Nature of Christianity, pass for *Zeal* for Religion! Are Men to be curs'd, or punish'd, or destroy'd, out of *Zeal* for the Gospel, by which all Severity is forbid? Where are we commanded to quarrel for the Peace of the Church? or to run mad for the Reasonableness of Liturgies? or to fight for the *Divine Original* of *Human Forms*? or to deliver Men to the Devil, for the saving of their Souls?

How unlike is our Modern *Zeal* to that of the Apostles, and how unworthy to be call'd by that Name! They liv'd under Hardships and Stripes, and ventur'd their Lives to convert Unbelievers: Our present Zealots live at Ease and in Plenty; and their *Zeal* is devoutly employ'd about Tythes, Honours, Garments, and Forms. They do not pretend to venture their Livings and their Lives to convert either *Pagan*, or *Papist*, or *Mahometan*. The *Idolatry* and *Infidelity* under which the miserable World lies, do not seem to interrupt their Quiet and their Enjoyments. But if a Dozen harmless Christians presume

The Independent Whig. 177

to worship God in a Barn; or to pray to God without Book; or to commemorate *Christ's* Death with Praises and Prayers, such as a devout Heart dictates; or to refuse complying with a Rote of Words, which they judge neither edifying nor warrantable; or to follow their Consciences, which alone can justify them in the Sight of God; and not the Authority of Men, which cannot justify them in the Sight of God: they are allarm'd, and their Church totters if Conscience is protected.

If this be the Spirit of Christianity, I must own my self to have been hitherto a Stranger to Christianity; and yet these Men go on to tell us, that they are the only true Church, tho' they possess not one Grain of that Charity which distinguishes a Christian from a Reprobate, as much as a Rational Soul does a Man from a Monkey; and to damn all other Churches, that is, the whole World, without taking one Step towards bringing them into a State of Salvation.



NUMBER XXIV.

Wednesday, June 29. 1720.

Of PERSECUTION.



HERE are but two Ways of propagating Religion, namely, Miracles and Exhortation. The one depends upon divine Power, and the other upon the Strength of Reason. Where the Finger of God appears, all further Testimony is needless; and where the Truth is obvious to Reason, Miracles are needless. God never wills us to believe that which is above our Reason, but he at the same Time commands our Faith by Miracles. He does not leave necessary Things doubtful; and for this Reason alone it is, that Men are said to be *left without Excuse*.

Every Point of Belief therefore must be supported either by Reason or Miracle, or else it is no Point of Belief at all. Both the *Jewish* and the Christian Law were delivered and enforced

forced with manifest Signs and Demonstrations of God's extraordinary Presence and Power. And it has been very justly boasted of the Christian Religion in particular, that it spread and prospered by Miracles, Persuasion, and Clemency, in Opposition to Violence and Cruelty.

But when Christianity became tainted and defaced by Priestcraft, it grew necessary to have many Points believed, which contradicted both Revelation and common Sense: Therefore its *Foster Fathers*, who to the Worship of God, added the Worship of themselves, had no other Way to prove their System but by Wrath and Vengeance. Reason was against them, and Miracles not for them: So their whole Dominion stood upon Falshood, guarded by Force. This Force, when it is exercised upon a religious Account, is called *Persecution*; which is what I am now to consider and expose.

To punish Men for Opinions that are even plainly False and Absurd, is barbarous and unreasonable. We possess different Minds as we do different Bodies; and the same Proposition carries not the same Evidence to every Man alike, no more than the same Object appears equally clear to every Eye. A cholerick Temper, when it is not corrected with Reason, and seasoned with Humanity, is naturally Zealous. A phlegmatick Temper, on the other side, as it is naturally slow, so is it lukewarm and indifferent. Is there any

Merit in having a warm Complexion, or any Sin in being dull?

But further; to punish a Man for not seeing the Truth, or for not embracing it, is in the first place, to make him miserable, because he is already so; and in the second Place, to pluck Vengeance out of God's Hands, to whom alone it belongs, if we will take his own Word for it. If this Severity is pretended to be for his Good, I would ask, Is manifest Cruelty any Token of Kindness, or was it ever taken for such? Does it not always encrease the Evil which it is employed to cure? Is Destruction the Means to Happiness? Absurd and terrible!

But what, if, after all, the Person persecuted should be found an Adherent to Truth and Honesty, and *his* Enemies should prove *their* Enemies? Would not this be adding Cruelty to Falshood, and heaping up Guilt with both Hands? This indeed is often the Case. And where it is not altogether so, the Persecutors are still inexcusable. He who, in the Search of Truth, does all he can, does as much as he ought. God requires no more, and what Man dares do it, who fears him? When *he* acquits, who is it that condemns?

Besides, he that suffers, or at least dies, for Religion, gives a Testimony by so doing, that his Conscience is dearer to him than Ease or Interest: Whereas the Patrons of Persecution have manifestly personal Motives and self Ends in it. It gratifies their Pride,

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The Independent Whig. 181

awes Mankind, and brings them Obedience and Gain.

Our blessed Saviour, who had no View but the Redemption of the World, never used his Omnipotence, or the least Force, to subdue his Enemies, though he knew their Hearts to be malicious and implacable. He neither delivered them to Death nor the Devil, even for their hellish Designs to kill him; much less for Points of Error or Speculation. He reasoned with all Men, but punished none. He used Arguments, he worked Wonders; but Severities he neither practised, nor recommended. His was a different Spirit. He rebuked his Apostles with Sharpness, when, being yet full of the Spirit of this World, and void of the Spirit of God, they were for bringing down Fire from Heaven upon the *Heretical Samaritans*. The merciful Jesus would not hurt these half Heathens, though they rejected him in Person; for he *came not to destroy Mens Lives, but to save them*: And they who take another Method, give the Lye to the Lord of Life, and disown him for their Head.

His Apostles, as soon as they had received the Holy Ghost, grew wiser and more merciful. They shewed by Miracles, that they were endowed with the Divine Power, but they never used either to compel or to burn, though they were beset with false Teachers, and opposed by Gain-sayers. They were so far from giving ill Usage, that they never re-

182 *The Independent Whig.*

turned it. The Exercise of *wholsome Severities* was no part of their Doctrine. Prayers and Perswasions were their only Arms, and such as became the *Gospel of Peace*.

This was the mild and heavenly Behaviour of Christ and his Apostles towards those who did not believe, or believed wrong; and it was followed by all their Successors who aimed at the Good of Souls. But those who used the Sacred Function, as a Stirrup to Power and Gain, made a new Gospel of their own Decisions, and forced it upon the World, partly by *Fighting*, and partly by *Cursing*. The Apostles taught Christ, and their Successors taught Themselves. It was not enough to believe the Doctrine of Christianity, but you must believe it in Words of their *inventing*. To dispute their Decrees, though they contradicted common Sense and the Spirit of God, was Heresy; and Heresy was Damnation. And when, in Consequence of this, they had allotted a pious Christian to eternal Flames, for his Infidelity in *them*, they dispatched him thither with all speed; because he was to be damned in the *other* World, therefore he was to be hanged or burned in *this*. A terrible Gradation of Cruelty! to be cursed, burned, and damned! But it was something natural; it began from persecuting Priests, and ended in Hell, and the Devil was the *last* and *highest* Executioner.

Thus they became *Prelates* of both Worlds, and Proprietors of the Punishments of both.

Even

The Independent Whig. 183

Even where the Civil Sword was not at their Command, their Vengeance was as successfully, and in my Opinion, more terribly executed without it, by the temporal Effect of their Excommunication. For the Person under it was looked upon as a Dæmon, and one in the Power of the Devil; and so driven out, like a wild Beast, from all the Comforts of Life, and human Society; to perish in a Desert, by Hunger, or the Elements, or Beasts of Prey. And all this, perhaps, for denying a Word or a Phrase, which was never known in Scripture, though impudently pretended to be fetch'd from thence.

Such dreadful Dominion had they usurped over the Bodies and Souls of Men, and so implacably did they exercise it! And, to fill up the Measure of their Falshood and Cruelty, they blasphemously pretended to be serving God, when they were acting as if there was none.

Those who set up for Infallibility have found a good Excuse, if it were true, for the insupportable Tyranny, infinite Murthers, and wide Devastations, which their Religion has every where introduced. But those, who exact a blind Obedience to Decrees, which they own to be human, and annex Penalties to Positions, which we know to be false, and they know to be disputable; and, in fine, act and dictate as if they were infallible, without pretending to be so; are so utterly without all Excuse, that I know no Lan-

guage which affords a Name proper for their Behaviour.

The *Mahometan* Imposture was professedly to be spread by the Sword. It had nothing else but that and Libertinism to recommend it. But to propagate the Christian Religion by Terror or Arms, is to deny it. It owns no such Spirit. It rendered it self amiable, and gained Ground by a Principle of Peace and Love. These were the Means of Christ's instituting, for the Recommendation and Defence of his Gospel; and they, who would chuse contrary ones, charge him with Folly, and have Ends to serve very different from his. Ambition, Pride, and Revenge, may make good Use of Violence and Persecution; but they are the Bane of Christianity, which always sinks when Persecution rises. The vilest and most profligate Men are ever the greatest Promoters of it; and the most virtuous are the greatest Sufferers by it. Libertines stick at nothing; but they who have the Fear of God, cannot comply with all Things.


Persecution is therefore *the War of Craft against Conscience*, and of Impiety against Truth. Reason, Religion, and Liberty, are its great Foes; but Ignorance, Tyranny, and Atheism, its great Seconds and Support. We ought then constantly to oppose all Claims of Dominion in the Clergy; for they naturally end in Cruelty. I believe it will be hard to shew, that ever the Priesthood, at any Time,
or

or in any Place, enjoyed the Power of Persecution, without making use of it.

N U M B E R X X V .

Wednesday, July 6. 1720.

Of C O N S E C R A T I O N .

OLINESS is that Character of Purity, which originally and essentially appertains to God Almighty, (as a Being utterly incapable of Stain and Imperfection;) but is also ascribed, in a restrained and relative Sense, to every Act of Devotion, and every Person performing it. It is an active and rational Thing; and where it is attributed to Things inanimate or irrational, it is either merely in a figurative Sense, or in no Sense at all.

Thus, when the Elements in the Sacraments are said to be Holy, it is meant only of the Uses to which they are apply'd, and the Purposes for which they are taken; for, tho' they were consecrated over and over again,

gain, yet, if they are never taken, or never devoutly taken, they have in themselves no more Holiness than a common Roll, or a Cup of cold Water.

And thus, when a People are said to be a *Holy People*, it is meant of their sincere Love of God, and Conformity to his Will, and of the Actions by them perform'd in Consequence of these good Affections. But, if such Actions, tho' seemingly devout, are superstitious, or hypocritical; there is no more Holiness in them, than in the *Indians* worshipping the Devil, or in a Boy's saying his Prayers to avoid Whipping.

And thus, when a House, or a Piece of Ground is said to be Holy, it is understood only of some Mark of Holiness there shewn, either by the extraordinary Presence of God, or by some Act or Acts of Worship performed there to him. But when these Marks of Omnipotence, and these Acts of Devotion cease, that Ground is no more than common Ground, and that House is a common House.

And thus, lastly, when the Priests are call'd *Holy unto the Lord*, it is meant only of their assisting at the solemn Acts of Adoration which are paid to him. At other times, they are as other Men; as is evident from their Living after the Manner of other Men.

Holiness, therefore, consists only in a virtuous and pious Disposition towards God,
and

The Independent Whig. 187

and is only shewn by the Actions which it produces. But as Superstition, especially when govern'd by Craft, never fails to see, or to think it sees, Effects and Operations, which neither Religion nor common Sense can shew; hence Men have been generally perswaded that Places, Buildings, Utenils, and Garments, did actually possess a real Holiness; that Stones and Brickbats are blessed; and that Timber, Surplices and Bells are exceeding godly Bodies.

To help on this wretched and senseless Credulity, the *Pagan* and *Popish* Priests have gone so far as to compose Farces of *Legerdemain*, call'd by them *Offices of Consecration*; the whole End of which was, they pretended, to bestow Godliness upon dead Earth, and Things inanimate. Thus they deceived the People in the Name of the Lord, and gravely made Speeches (which they call'd Prayers) over Wood, Stones, and Iron; by Virtue of which, the said Wood, Stones and Iron were obliged to become good Orthodox Lumber, and as sanctify'd Bodies as the other Members of the Congregation.

If one was to demand of these reverend Worthies, *who required these Things at their Hands?* I doubt it would prove a hard Question; and probably the impertinent Enquirer would be dispatch'd for Satisfaction to *Satan*, or the Inquisition—An effectual and orthodox Answer to such busy Unbelievers, and often practised with terrible Success!

But

188 *The Independent Whig.*

But as I live in a Nation where such Superstitions and Cruelties are, I bless God, at an End; I take Leave to be amazed at the Assurance of those Popish Consecrators, who thus impiously pretend to draw down an Attribute of the Almighty, and endow with it what Spot of Earth they please. Will these insolent Deceivers say, that God Almighty cannot hear as well and as favourably, a Prayer put up from a Ship as from a Chappel? Or in what Part of Scripture are we told that he will be rather worshipped at *St. Peter's*, than upon the *Alps*; or at *Loretto*, or any other *consecrated Place*, rather than a Booth, or a Barn; provided the Worship is perform'd with equal Piety? Or does e'er a Text in the New Testament inform us, that one Piece of Earth is holier than another; or that any Man or Society of Men can make it so?

If consecrated Ground has no more Holiness in it than other Ground, how is divine Worship more acceptable in it than in other Ground? And if it has some uncommon Sanctity in it; let those concerned tell us what it is, how it is, and by what certain Signs we shall know it? And whether it keeps all the said Holiness to it self, and amongst its own inanimate Heap of Stones, Timber, and Nails; and then what are *We* the better for it? Or whether the religious Bricks and Mortar do in good Earnest communicate Part of their Piety to the People? And, if

So; in what Manner do they perform this; and how does it appear first, and operate afterwards? But if all, this is a Mystery, let them shew us where it is revealed in Scripture, wherein all other Mysteries are revealed.

If by Consecration any Change is made, the same must be either visible, or only mystical. If the Change is visible, then it comes under the Test and Examination of our Senses, and must be evident to all Men: But if the Change is purely mystical, it must be revealed to all. So that we must either have the Evidence of Sense, or the Evidence of God's Word and Authority, which is as good. But where neither of these Proofs appears, our Faith and Assent ought neither to be demanded; nor given, if demanded.

If Prayers are more prevailing with God, and divine Service more welcome to him, when they come from consecrated Ground; then all Worship and Devotion ought to be performed only at Church; and Family Religion ought either to be neglected, (as lame and insufficient) or every private House should be consecrated; and then every House would be a Chappel, and every Chappel is a Church. I would be glad to know, why only one House in a Parish should be consecrated, that is, made fit to pray in; and why not every House, for the same Reason? For, nothing that helps Devotion ought to be omitted, such Omission being doubtless a great Sin.

But

But if it is allowed that People may pray to as good Purpose *out of* consecrated Ground as *in it*; how are Prayers at Church better than in a Chamber, or the Fields? Or, why should the Prayers of Five Hundred have more Need of consecrated Ground, than the Prayers of One, Two, or Three? Or, if a Place becomes Holy by the Devotions perform'd in it, then every Place where Devotions are perform'd, is as Holy as another; and if so, pray what Use of a Form of Words, and a particular Office for that Purpose?

Suppose a Church to be consecrated, and yet never after used; is it, for all this, Holy? Or, suppose it has been used for all the Purposes of a Church, and yet was never formerly consecrated; is it, for all that, not Holy?

Either the Scripture is not a sufficient Rule of Worship, or this Business of Consecration in *Popish* and *Pagan* Countries, is a needless, empty, superstitious Foppery, an evident Trick of Priestcraft; as if the Priests could change the Nature of Things, and confer the Grace which they have not themselves upon Stocks and Stones, that have not, nor can have, the least moral Goodness, or Pravity, in them. A General of an Army may as modestly and rationally contend, that the Ground, on which his Pavillion stands, is valiant Ground; and that the Ticking, of which it is made, is courageous Ticking. And, according to the same Way of Reasoning,

ing, there is prodigious Policy in the Boards that compose the Council-Table; The Carpet is a long-headed Carpet, and the Wainscot and Chairs understand wonderfully well the Interest of *Christendom*.

If Devotion gives a Tincture of it self to Wood and Walls; the Pravity of ill Actions must, by the same Rule, diffuse it self, and taint all the House or Fields where such ill Actions are committed. A Jobb of Lewdness must needs debauch the Curtains greatly, and the Bed-cloaths must partake of the Iniquity; and were justly punished by Fire in *Herefordshire* for that Reason; at which Execution, I am told, a certain devout Person now Living, was a very zealous and useful Assistant. Every Counter and Shop-board in the City must, for the like Reason, be guilty of unpardonable Tricking and Lying; and for Falshood and Dissimulation, Heaven have Mercy upon some great Buildings at the Court End of the Town!

I would here be glad to know the precise Extent of the Influence which Holiness and Vice have upon the inanimate Creation: Is a thick Church-wall as quickly and fully impregnated with them as a thin One? And do they never extend an Inch beyond the Church and Church-yard? Or, is the Church equally Holy, whether much Devotion, or little, is perform'd in it? Or have the Popish Priests set Bounds to the Godliness of the Ground, and the Building; and said ———

Thus far, or thus deep, O Ground! shall thy Holiness extend, and no farther.

If Consecration signifies any Thing more than a Declaration, that such a Place is set aside for the Worship of God, I wish it could be explained and proved; and the rather, because Things of the most simple and obvious Nature have, by the Guile or Superstition of designing Church-men, been render'd to the credulous gaping Multitude, mysterious and tremendous; the natural Enthusiasm which resides in the Mind of Man; having always made him the Prey and Property of Delusion and Deluders.

Happy, thrice happy, are we, who live in a Country where all this *Pagan* Idolatry and these Monkish Fooleries receive no Countenance from our Laws; but, on the contrary, are forbid and punishable by them. The Laity at the Reformation had seen what Use the Priests make of this dark Jugling, and of these *Hocus Pocus* Tricks; and, therefore, would not suffer them to be play'd over again, to deceive superstitious and enchanted Bigots, by making them pay great Prices to be buried in consecrated Ground, which rose, like the Value of Jewels, as they approached nearer to the Bodies of Saints, or to the Altar, where it seems the Devil could not come at them; with many other advantageous Frauds, which I shall hereafter expose to the World, when I treat again upon this prolifick Subject.

though he believes by the Lump, and swallows Creeds by Dozens; yet if he is immoral, he is worse than an Infidel. What is the Use of Belief, but to govern our Practice, and beget good Deeds? We all see the Necessity of living well; but to believe well, and do no more, is the same Thing, with Regard to others, as not to believe at all; and, with Regard to our selves, worse.

A worthy Life infers worthy Principles; but a base Behaviour contradicts and dishonours an honest Profession. Will any one tell me, that a virtuous Heathen is not a better Man, and more in the Favour of God, than a profligate Christian? A *Pagan*, who violates not the Laws of Truth and Peace, is, in my Eyes, an infinitely more religious Person, than a turbulent and forsworn Christian Priest, though he wears a Mitre.

Socrates, Plato, Cato and Brutus, were excellent Persons, though they were only govern'd by the simple Dictates of human Reason, and were utter Strangers to Creeds and Fathers, and our present orthodox Notions established by Law. Who, that has any Care for his Soul, any Honour for his God, or any Love for Mankind, would not rather chuse to be animated by the rational and beneficent Sentiments of these *righteous Gentiles*, than be possess'd with the fierce and inhuman Spirit of *Father Laud, Friar Francis, or Doctor Bungle*, though they were all sound

Believers?

The Independent Whig. 195

Believers? I would have mentioned *Aristotle* here with the other *Ancients*; but I find, that though he was very Orthodox, and a great Enemy to Dr. *Clark's Arian Principles*, * yet this true Believer was a very wicked Liver. However, as a true Friend to the Church, *he died the Death of the Righteous*, and 'tis said, enjoys *everlasting Life*. †

Besides, saying is not proving. If we would be thought Christians, we ought to shew our selves Christians. Living well, is the best and only Evidence we can give that we believe well. If a Man professes his Faith in Jesus Christ with one Breath, and swears falsely by his Name with another, why should I give Credit to one who so effectually contradicts himself? We do not credit the Propositions of Mathematicians, till they have gained our Assent by Demonstration: And why should we trust any Man's Professions of Faith and Morality, before he has, by Works of Faith and Morality, proved them sincere? If we hear a Man full of the Praises of Loyalty, and yet see him every Day rebelling, would we not take him for a Madman or a

* Emanuel de Moura, and some other orthodox Writers say, that Aristotle was a steady Believer of the Trinity.

† This is the Opinion of Sepulveda, a learned Man in the 16th Century.

The whole Article of Aristotle, in Mr. Bayle's Dictionary, is well worth reading.

196 *The Independent Whig.*

Deceiver? A good Life is beneficial both to our selves and others, but a good Belief without it, is neither.

But besides, this same Belief is perhaps necessary; and if so, what is unavoidable, is not vertuous. Where is the Praise or Merit of feeling the Heat of the Sun, or the Severity of the Winter? Or, of hearing Sounds, when our Ears are open? To believe in Christ was and is inevitable: His Miracles command Assent. But to do his Will, is a Trial of our Piety and Virtue. And for our Saviour himself, would his Law have been ever received, or his Doctrine believed, had he contradicted Both by his Example? Or could the Apostles, without leading the Lives of Christians, have gained Converts to Christianity?

I have placed Faith and Practice in this Light, to shew how little valuable the Presence of believing well makes Men, unless they also live well. I would therefore bring our High Clergy to be tried by this Test. If they are more zealous for Orthodoxy than Piety; if they abhor a virtuous Man, who prefers the Dictates of his own Conscience, before those of their Ambition and Authority; and openly court and honour any Person, who is observant of the Priesthood, tho' he lives at manifest Defiance with Heaven; if they treat Unbelievers and Debauchees as pure Churchmen, and devout Christians as Schismatics, Hereticks, and the Lord knows what,

The Independent Whig. 197

what, their Faith is selfish and vain, and such Religion is false and absurd.

Conformity is the Word! it is the Mother of all Virtues, and the Sanctifier of all Crimes. It is, in fine, All in All. And yet, so weak and blind am I, that I take this same applauded Conformity to be in some Cases a very great Sin. If a Man, for Instance, in the Worship of God, follows the Authority of any Church whatsoever, and dissents at the same Time from the Suggestions and Perswasions of his own Conscience; it is certain, that he does not worship God at all, but mocks him, adores Men, and condemns himself. If, on the other Hand, he thinks his Soul in Danger, or in no Way of being edify'd in any Church, tho' ever so Orthodox; he ought to desert it, and join with that which appears to him better. If I should thwart or disturb my Conscience, by bowing fashionably to the Altar, I would ask the Clergy, whether ought the Altar or my Conscience to be first or most regarded? He who believes at Random, and obeys blindly, may give great Satisfaction to Churchmen; but he neither knows the Gospel of Truth, nor obeys the Precepts of the Holy Ghost.

It is a surprizing Thing, the Selfishness and Pride of Man! What Priest is there that (in Disputes of the most trivial Nature) does not grow hot and eager for Victory, and angry if his Opinion does not prevail? In Spiritual Affairs, this Spirit of levelling all Men

198 *The Independent Whig.*

to our own Conceits, is still fiercer, and Religion, which was given and intended to subdue the Passions, is turn'd into an Engine to raise them. We are much more zealous that Men should conform to us than to Holiness, and would rather have them obedient than godly. How many High-Church Parsons would not rather see their Parishioners *drunken Churchmen, than sober Dissenters?*

Laymen are at least as capable of judging of *Error* as the Clergy, and more proper, as having no Interest on either Side of the Question. However, the latter have usurped this Privilege wholly to themselves, and with good Policy; for it has wonderfully answer'd their great Ends of Power and Wealth. We are not therefore to wonder that many of them give much more Countenance and Quarter to the most heinous Immoralities, which are only Sins against God; than to the least Variation from an Orthodox Opinion, which is an unpardonable Sin against Themselves. The greatest Mistakes, when involuntary, are innocent in the Sight of God; but in the Eyes of the Priests, the smallest are often damnable. Nay, many a Man has been pronounc'd a Heretick, and deliver'd to Hell and the Devil, for his pious Searches after Truth, and his devout Adherence to it.

Thus we see that God may be pleas'd, and some of the Clergy provok'd, by one and the same

same Action. From hence it wofully happens, that weak Men and Profligates, who will do and say as they are bid, without any Biass from Reason and Conscience, are caress'd, encourag'd and promoted; while the Wise and Virtuous, who cannot abandon Truth and the Fear of God, to promote the Craft, and humour the Pride of assuming Men, are brow beaten, reproached and persecuted. Mr. *Whiston*, and the Parson of his Parish, are known Instances of this shameful Truth.

I know several, who, notwithstanding their avowed Disbelief of the Gospel and all Reveal'd Religion, are in high Esteem with the High Clergy; because, tho' they deny our Saviour, they reverence his Successors; and are zealous for the Hierarchy, tho' they laugh at Religion. The Truth is, if a Man is but a hearty Churchman, it is never asked whether he is a Christian. Profligates, void of common Honesty, and common Sense, have been, and are still, reckon'd True Friends to the Church, and courted by the Ecclesiasticks, as their Patrons and Defenders. And indeed, where Religion is turned into Faction, such Measures and Alliances are natural and necessary.

But, in the Opinion of us Christians, a wicked Liver, whether he is a Believer or no, is an Enemy to Religion, which is propagated and supported by Example; and to human Society, which is maintain'd by the

Bonds of Morality. Whereas a good Man, though a Heretick, is a Friend to Religion, Virtue, and his Country. To conclude: He who is a Rebel to the King of Kings, is like to prove but an ill Subject to his Vicegerent; and as bad a Pattern to his Fellow-Subjects.

NUMBER XXVII.

Wednesday, July 20. 1720.



*D*R. Burnet tells us, in his *Letters of Travels*, that the Priests of *Italy* have found out a Secret to make Men miserable, in spite of all the Abundance and Profusion wherewith Nature hath blessed that happy Climate: They measure their own Happiness by the Peoples Calamity; enjoy no Pleasures in which they take any part; nor are satisfied with all the Plunder and Depredations they make upon them, unless they can also heighten their own Relish, by making the little they leave to the Laity, insipid and tasteless. As

As one Instance of this Truth ; he informs us, that the Priests have made it a Principle of Religion in the People, to mingle Water with their Wine in the Cask, which soon fours it ; whereas they always keep their own pure and unmix'd, because they say it is to be used in the Sacrament ; and so he observes, that Travellers can drink no good Wine, but what they buy from the Convents.

For this and such like Reasons they preach Penances, Mortification, Fasting, and a Contempt of worldly Riches, and of all those earthly Blessings, which indulgent Heaven has given to wretched Mortals, to alleviate their Sorrows, sweeten their Calamities, and make the nauseous Draught of Life go down ; whereas we cannot better shew our Acknowledgments and Gratitude to Providence, than by making a proper Use of the good Things he has given us, and by enjoying them in every Degree, which will not destroy that Enjoyment, and change it into a Misfortune.

If we drink or eat more than our Heads will carry, or our Stomachs digest, Distempers, Indiscretions, and sometimes Murthers succeed ; and, if we spend faster than our Incomes will supply, there is a sure Foundation laid for future Want and Misery : But nothing can be more absurd or impious, than to make Abstinence from Food or Pleasures meritorious, any farther than it conduces to
Health,

Health, or qualifies us for Business. Almighty God reserved but one Tree in all *Paradise* from our first Parents; but the Priests would keep them all from their Posterity.

Besides, the Luxury of the Rich (when it does not exceed the Bounds of Vertue and Prudence) is the Wealth and Support of the Poor, and the best judged Charity: For, what we give in gross Sums to, or for the Use of those who appear to be in Necessity, is often mistaken, and applied to maintain present Idleness, or reward past Extravagance; and sometimes too, I doubt, is pocketed by those who are trusted to distribute it; whereas whatever is laid out upon the Produce of Labour, and for such Manufactures as employ Multitudes of People, can never be misapplied. It might easily be made appear, that there is not a Piece of wrought Silk, Linnen, or Woollen Cloth, which has not contributed to the Maintenance of more than an Hundred Thousand industrious People, who must be all kept alive one Way or other.

As it is the highest Crime to destroy our Beings, so it is proportionably wicked to endeavour to make them miserable: The Glory and Honour of God are best consulted, in promoting the Happiness of Mankind. It is profane, and a kind of Blasphemy, to attempt to persuade People, that the good God takes Pleasure in the vexing and tormenting his Creatures: He is not pleased by human
Sacri-

The Independent Whig. 203

Sacrifices, nor by human Sufferings of any Kind: A pale Aspect, the Griping of the Guts, wry and distorted Faces, and being Ghosts before our Time, will contribute to no Ends of Religion; and therefore, I confess, that I cannot see how Fasting can serve God, or answer any Purposes of Devotion, or indeed can enhance any Appetite, unless to a good Dinner.

Nothing consequently can be more ridiculous, than for the *Romish* Clergy to tell us, that any Part of Religion consists in fasting Days, and fasting Weeks; which oblige the wretched People to insipid and unwholesome Diet, whilst they indulge themselves, and riot in the richest Wines, and the luxurious Dishes of Salmon and Turbatt, with all the costly Inhabitants of the Liquid Element: Besides, it is impolitick, as well as uncharitable; it discourages Trade and Industry, depopulates Nations, and depreciates Matrimony, by rendring the People unable to maintain and raise their Families.

Riches and Labour are two Words which signify the same Thing: Nature spontaneously supplies but little to the Use of Man; all the rest is the Produce of Invention and Industry: And therefore whatever does contribute to make Mankind idle and less useful to one another, conduces so far to their Want and Misery. One Holy Day, strictly kept, robs the Poor of more than a whole Year's Charity will supply. A little loose
Money

Money pick'd up at the Church-Doors, and afterwards divided between the Parson, Church-Wardens, and a few favourite Objects, will make but poor Amends for the Taxation of the Nation, and of every Person in it, with the Loss of a Day's Labour, and Profit of his Trade; which Loss probably cannot amount to less than Two Hundred Thousand Pounds, without having any Regard to the Extravagance and Debaucheries committed upon those Days; which often consume the Acquisitions of a Week, and render the common People listless, and unwilling to return to their Labour again. I may therefore venture to affirm, that there is more Charity in taking away one Saint's Day, than in building and endowing Twenty Colleges.

However, to do Right to my Countrymen and their genuine Clergy, I must freely confess, that we suffer very little from the Penitential Observance or Fasting Part of our Holy-Days; for the Poor do not fast at all, unless they can get nothing to eat; and the Rich, in Imitation of their Guides, hold out no longer than is necessary to digest their former Excesses, and get better Stomachs to a double Dinner; as old experienc'd Sinners often live a Day or two with Sobriety and Innocence, to enjoy a Debauch the remaining Part of the Week. At the Universities, as I am told, it is quite given up, and there is not more *Epicurism* than on those Days; and

and to their Churches there are ancient Vestries annex'd, which are the consecrated Repositories of Pipes, Sack and Tobacco, where the Reverends take regularly a Whiff and a Cup, to prepare them for the Fatigues of the ensuing Service.

But how little soever Holy-Days and staid Fasts contribute either to the Temporal or Eternal Happiness of the Laity, yet the *Romish* Clergy have been able sufficiently to find their own Account in them: When all other Shops are shut, theirs are open; where they sell their Spiritual Cargo of Grimaces, Visions, Beads, Indulgences, and Masses, for Silver and Gold, Lands and Tenements; and to enhance the Value of their Merchandize, and perswade the People of the Reasonableness of such an Exchange, they make it their Business, and exert all their Endeavours, to depreciate worldly Happiness, and cry down all the good Things of this Earth, that they may have them all to themselves. If they can extinguish the Appetites God has given us, and teach us the Secret to live without our Estates, or to make us think it dangerous to live on them, they hope to have them for their Pains; for who can have a better Title to our Superfluities than our spiritual Guides, who have inspired us with so much refined Devotion, and have given to us lasting Estates in Paradise, in lieu of a few momentary Pleasures, and frail and earthly Tabernacles below?

By

By these Arts, and many others, which I shall shew in the Progress of this Paper, the Priests are become possessed of so much Dominion and Wealth.

NUMBER XXVIII.

Wednesday, July 27. 1720.

Of AUTHORITY.



Y Faith is often, if not most commonly, meant, an inward Persuasion or determined Assent of the Mind to a religious Proposition affirm'd, or deny'd; and such Consent can never be given but by the Conveyance, and from full Conviction, of the Senses, or the manifest Operation of the Holy Ghost; and therefore must depend wholly upon what appears to be infallible Inspiration, or infallible Information. In this Sense of the Word, I doubt there can be no such thing in the World; for as no Man living ever saw the

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the Miracles of Christ and his Apostles, or can prove his particular System from self-evident Propositions, or can be sure he is inspired by the Holy Ghost; so he cannot have Faith in this Sense, whatever he himself may imagine.

Therefore the only reasonable Sense of the Word is, *An Assent of the Mind to the Truth of a Proposition upon probable Arguments, or upon the Testimony of other Persons*; which can never produce Certainty, but only *Opinion* or *Belief*; which must be stronger or weaker, according to the many Degrees of Probability. A probable Evidence can only produce a suitable Assent; and when any thing does not appear at all probable to us, we cannot avoid dissenting as to the Truth of it. Almighty God does not require of us to give the Lye to our Understandings, and to put out and extinguish the only Light he has given to Men, by which they can discern Truth from Falshood, and Vertue from Vice.

The Apostles and Evangelists, who were evidently endowed from Above with extraordinary Gifts and Graces, were undeniable Witnesses of the Truth of the Gospel, to those who saw their Miracles: And their Writings, and the Testimony which they bequeath'd to their Followers, sealed, as it was, with their Blood, have passed the Examination of many Ages, and constitute the highest Degree of human Probability, and consequently carry

* along

along with them an irresistible Authority, and can admit of no Disobedience or Dispute: They are a real Authority, in the most strict Sense of the Word; I mean, as it is apply'd to the Propagation of Religious Opinions, and as producing a lively Faith next to Persuasion.

But no Decisions or Resolutions of uninspired Men are, or ought to be, of any weight with us, but so far as they will bear the Examination of our Senses and our Reason. The only Motive any Man can have to believe, or to put this Confidence in another, is, that the Person trusted is not deceived himself, and will not deceive him; neither of which he can have any tolerable Assurance of: for no Man is infallible; and the gravest and most solemn Pretenders, are as easily cheated as the meet Vulgar; and, what is more, will as often lye and cheat others; and therefore there can be no such thing as Authority in this Sense amongst Men: For let a Matter in it self be ever so certain, I am by no Precept human or divine obliged to believe it true, till it is proved true; and it is the Business of my Reason alone to distinguish what is so from what is otherwise.

God's Word, though to be believ'd without Proof, yet ought first to be proved to be his; which Proof, it is the Province of my Understanding to examine. The Words and Allegations of Men, or of the Church, ought, before they are believ'd, to be proved, either
by

by divine Authority, or by Reason: If by Reason; then Reason must judge of Reason, and every Man who has it is a Judge: If by Divine Authority; even here our Reason must be satisfied, whether it is Divine Authority or not. So that human Authority is either nothing at all; or at most only an Opportunity given, or an Invitation made, to examine by private Judgment, the Truth of what it says.

All Books therefore, except the Holy Scriptures, and all Names, except those of our blessed Saviour and his inspired Followers, ought to be of no Authority with us, any farther than to convince our Understandings by solid Arguments, and self-evident Truths; and a Beggar or a Cocker, when he can do this, is so far entitled to equal Credit, or, if you will, to equal *Authority*, with Councils and Fathers.

Every Man, that reasons with you, appeals to your Reason, and his Arguments lie at your Mercy, whether you will believe them or no; and every Man, who brings you only his Assertions, ought also to bring you his Proofs, or else you are at full Liberty to reject or despise them: It adds nothing to his Weight in this Matter, that perhaps he wears a *Cloven Cap* or a *Sable Gown*: There have been no greater Deceivers of Mankind, than such as have worn these Emblems of Gravity; and indeed Gravity has ever been one essential Characteristick of Imposture.

210 *The Independent Whig.*

There is no Authority in founding and sanctified Names, whether they be those of *Archbishops, Bishops, Priests, or Deacons*. It is very certain, these goodly Words are so far from having any Charm in them against Deceit and Roguery, that the compleatest of all Villanies, and the most masterly and mischievous of all Delusions, have been, and still are, protected and propagated by them in *Po-pish* and other Priest-ridden Nations. *His Holiness* and *Most Holy*, are Terms appropriated to *St. Peter's Chair*, (and in our precious Pope *Laud's* Days they began to be current at *Lambeth*) altho' most that filled that Chair, have liv'd at Defiance with God and Man, and were the greatest Deceivers and Disturbers of the World.

Nor is there any certain Authority in Learning of any kind or degree. Who are better Scholars, or greater Rogues, than the *Jesuits*? Who was a more learned Man, or a greater Simpleton, than Mr. *Dodwell*? And, as to his genuine Ancestors, *Aquinas* and *Scotus*, those celebrated Founders of the Schools; who have been long the infallible Guides of the infallible Church; they were the most voluminous and most unintelligible Dunces that ever dabled in Sophistry, and darkened common Sense.

Pray what Evidence of Truth necessarily attends the Knowledge of the Oriental Tongues? The *Jews* understand *Hebrew*, and the *Turks* *Arabick*; and yet both continue fierce and obstinate Enemies to Christianity.

Nor

Nor are Men the more to be trusted, merely because they are acquainted with Ecclesiastical History and the Fathers. As to the Fathers, they are guilty of grievous Errors against Orthodoxy, and Church Power; in-
somuch that Father *Petavins*, the Jesuit, has pretended to prove that most of them were infected with Heresy, especially in their Notions about the Undivided Trinity. We all know, that St. *Austin* (the Foreman of all the *Latin* Saints and Fathers) was for admitting Children to the *Lord's Supper*, contrary to the Doctrine and Practice of our Church of *England* as by Law established. St. *Jerom* derives Episcopal Power from the Instigation of the Devil, which is also an impudent Reflection upon our Orthodox Church. St. *Basil* (I think it was) very fairly challenged the Emperor, his Liege Lord, to fight him; in defiance of the Doctrine of Passive Obedience, which is the peculiar Doctrine of our High Churchmen; and which, unless a Man believes and practises, he cannot be saved. St. *Ambrose* bullied *Theodosius*, the *Lord's Anointed*; and refused to admit his Imperial Majesty to partake of the Lord's Body, till he had made his humble Submission. St. *Gregory Nazianzen* gives a miserable and vile Character of Synods and Councils; and his Grace of *Canterbury*, when he was Bishop of *Lincoln*, and before, did the same. Dr. *Prideaux* shews *Tertullian* to have been a credulous weak Man, often mistaken and misled.

As to Ecclesiastical History, which is nothing but many large Volumes, containing some few of the Squabbles of the Bishops and inferior Clergy with one another, and all the World; I know not whether the Use of it can much alter for the better any Man's Life and Principles; since the most he can learn by it is, that the Reverend Heroes of of the Story were eternally cuffing and contradicting one another. Nothing of Humility, nor of Charity, nor of Uniformity, nor of Certainty, is to be found amongst them, or learned from them. And I know not at this Day any prevailing Opinion of any Sect of Christians, but what is both countenanced and condemn'd by one Father, or another.

Lastly; even the most apparent Piety, the most disinterested Mind, and the most unblameable Life, tho' to me certain Signs of a good Man, yet in the Eye of our best High Church-Men, are only *shining Sins*, and cannot entitle the Possessor to the least good Word or Tendernefs; much less to any Authority amongst Men. Dr. *Clarke*, Mr. *Whiston*, and others, are undeniable Instances of this Truth.

Upon the whole; Authority, as it is generally understood, is a Word pregnant with Danger and Nonsense. It is a false misleading Light, or rather none at all; for those who follow it, do only grope in the Dark: When we blindly trust to another, our own Eyes grow useless, or may give offence.

This

This shews its Peril; and for its Absurdity, it will appear from hence, that it is impossible to trust to one Authority, without trusting to more. For, either my own Reason must be consulted and followed; and if so, there is an end of all Authority: Or else, I must trust to some Authority to direct me what Authority I must trust to. And, if I have Liberty to chuse my first Guide, why not also my second, and so on? For, no Reason can be given, why I may rely on my Judgment in one Case, and yet must resign it in just such another Case.

But if no Choice at all is left us in these Matters, pray how shall we discern Heresy from Orthodoxy, and a *regular* Set of Ecclesiasticks, from an *irregular*? If I am born in *Scotland*, and educated in the *Presbyterian* Way; must I continue in an invincible Antipathy to what is there called *proud, lordly Prelacy*, and superstitious Surplices, and Popish Ceremonies? Or, have I a Right to examine and embrace the Doctrine and Discipline of our Orthodox Established Church? Or, am I to embrace them without examining them? And is my Judgment to approve and condemn, only what the Parson approves and condemns; and, in all other Spiritual Matters, to lie still and take its rest? If I leave one Church for another, out of Judgment; how am I to behave my self when my Judgment changes? Or, is it our Duty to conform, in spite of our Inclinations? And have we no

Right to dissent with Conscience and Conviction on our Side?


To conform without consenting, is a Contradiction, and a Mockery to the Spirit of Religion: And to conform, because I approve, is no Compliment to Authority, but, indeed destroys it, and justifies every Man in every Religion, provided he has taken all necessary Pains to find out the true one. If I have a Liberty to enquire which is the best Church, I have also a Liberty to blame its Errors, if I see any, as well as to admire its Excellencies: And the Authority of no Man or Men shall determine me in either, in Opposition to my Reason. If I praise the Advantages of any Church, I am my self praised by its Votaries, for doing Justice to those Advantages, which my Reason shews me: But if the same Reason discovers Blemishes in it, I am condemned by the same Votaries, for what I cannot help. So that I am applauded for Seeing, and damned for Seeing, at the same time, and from the same Principle; namely, that of Passion and Partiality.

There is therefore no Authority but two, Scripture and Reason. The Scripture is our Rule of Faith; and Reason, where God gives not his Spirit, is our Rule for understanding the Scripture.

NUMBER XXIX.

Wednesday, August 3. 1720.

Of EDUCATION.

T has often been the Subject of my serious Thoughts, to what Causes are owing the Depravation of Vertue and Morality in the World, and the seeming Decay of Human Understanding. If we read the *Greek, Roman*, and other ancient Histories, we shall find another Race of Men, than seem to be now existing upon the Face of the Earth. *Alexander* had Conquer'd the *East* before Thirty: *Scipio* and *Hannibal* performed Actions of great Eclat before Twenty: *Pompey* Triumph'd over *Europe, Asia* and *Africa*, long before his Middle-Age. Indced, thro' the whole *Roman* Story, we find their Generals, Orators, and Statesmen, shone in full Lustre in their early Youth; and could demand their Discharge from publick Business,

before the Age at which we are often thought qualify'd to enter upon it.

This Difference sure cannot be owing to any real Decay of Human Nature, which undoubtedly has been always the same since the Flood; on the contrary, 'tis to be presumed, since Almighty God hath communicated to us the marvelous Light of his Gospel, and has made himself more known to Men, that their Faculties are bettered and improved. Besides, this Difference is observable only in such as are entitled, by their Birth and Fortunes, to the most liberal Education; for, as to Arts and Sciences, the Moderns eminently (as I conceive) exceed the Ancient: They are better Mathematicians, and Mechanicks, better Navigators, better Musicians, and better Husbandmen, and they attain early to their greatest Perfection in these Arts; and therefore we must look out for other Causes to account for this *Phænomenon*, which I conceive to proceed only from their different Manner of Education.

The Antients were instructed by Philosophers, and the Moderns are taught by Priests: The first thought it their Duty to make their Pupils as useful as possible to their Country, and the later as subservient to themselves, and the Interests of their Order: One endeavoured to inspire them with noble and generous Sentiments, equally fit for Dominion or Subjection; and the Other always instill into them abject, sordid and pusillanimous Principles, to qualify

fy them to be proper Tools for their own low Purposes : In fhort, the first made it their Study and Bufinefs to enlarge and improve their natural Faculties; and growing Reason; and the latter to pervert, ftifle and extinguish every Approach towards true Knowledge and publick Vertue.

As foon as the Emperors and their Courts came into the Church, Ambition and Pride got in too; and the Innocence and Simplicity of primitive Christianity became corrupted, and changed into outward Pomp and Pageantry : The Clergy bethought themselves how (in the Modern Phrafe) *to make the best of their Bible* : Unluckily it was all againft them; and tho' they read it over and over, they found it every where levelled againft Spiritual Pride and Domination, and they could not fo much as pick out one direct Text for their Purpose.

What must be therefore done in this momentous Affair ? The Holy Writings were difpers'd Abroad, and could not be fuppreffed, and yet Riches and Power were of indifpenfable Neceffity to the Good of the Church ? Why ! fince they could not get them out of the Peoples Hands, they contrived how to render them of as little Ufe as poffible there ; and, in Order to it, they pointed all their Batteries againft Human Reason, and Polite Learning, and made it an heinous Sin to read any Heathen Authors : By which Means, in an Age or two, few
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could read at all; and the *Romans*, so famous for Knowledge, Vertue and Humanity, became (for the most Part) sunk to the lowest Dregs of Barbarism, Superstition and Ignorance.

But lest the curious and inquisitive Part of Mankind should not be wholly diverted from the Search after Knowledge, they invented and substituted in its Room, a senseless Jargon of undefined, insignificant, and canting Terms, confused Ideas, and indistinct Images; which they perswaded the World to esteem profound Learning and deep Wisdom: And then they reduced and determin'd all Questions in Philosophy and Religion by this Gibberish; and he got the Victory, who could hold out longest, and most confound his Auditory, by entangling them in an endless Labyrinth of Nonsense. Men of Wit and Genius were distasted at a Study, which would cost them so much Pains to attain, when they could find neither Pleasure in the Pursuit, nor Profit or Improvement in the Conquest; and having no Notion of any other Learning, they consented to let the Clergy have it all to themselves.

When they had so reduced the Laity to this happy and desireable State of Stupidity and Submission, they took away their Bible from them too; or, which was the same Thing, they continued it only in a Language, which, by the many Conquests upon the Empire, and the Revolutions of Time, was

understood by none but themselves. And now, having converted their Hearers into Asses, and Beasts of Carriage, they bridled them, they saddled them, they yoked them, and put heavy Burthens upon them, till they so overloaded the Jades, that they grew resty, and overturn'd their Packs and Riders too.

Thus the World came by the Reformation; which dispersed the thick Mist of Superstition and Ignorance, that then overshadowed all *Christendom*: The Laity were resolved to be no longer hood-wink'd; but a general Disposition arose in *Europe*, to revive ancient Learning and useful Knowledge: And the *Greek* and *Roman* Authors were sought after, rescued from Dust and Worms, and diligently read. Many Princes promoted these Studies, and gave all due Encouragement to Vertue and Learning: But this noble Spirit of Liberty lasted no longer than the Lives of those Princes, and while the Images of sacerdotal Oppressions were deep engraven in Mens Minds; which, like all other Things, wore out by Degrees.

The *Unum Magnum*, necessary to secure all the rest, was never thought of, or forgotten; which was to retrieve the Education of Youth out of the Hands of the Priesthood, and to reform the Universities, (which were contrived and established by Popes to support their own Pride and Power over the unhappy Laity,) and instead of suffering them
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to continue Seminaries of Faction, Tyranny, and Ecclesiastical Usurpations, to convert them into Schools of Vertue, Liberty, Knowledge, and true Religion: The old Leaven was permitted to remain, and the Clergy had still left to them the Education of the Nobility and Gentry in most Countries; and they were educated accordingly.

It became a Maxim in the Universities Abroad, That those, who were born to large Possessions and Estates, had no need of Learning; and such were always encouraged or connived at in mispending their Time in Idleness and Luxury, and were generally made the Companions of their Governors and Tutors in their Pleasures, who were perpetually instilling into their tender Minds Tyrannical or Slavish Principles. But when they had to do with Youths of sprightly Wit and Genius, who either, from their own Inclinations, or the Impulse of their Relations, would not be diverted from the Pursuit of Knowledge; they industriously put them upon a wrong Scent, and perplexed and confounded their Understandings with metaphysical Whimseys, and an artificial Cant: out of which many of them could never extricate their Senses; and such as did, spent often as many Years after they came into the World to do so, as they lost before in the Universities, to be upon the Level with those who had never been there.

The Independent Whig. 221

This soon became again the State of Learning and Knowledge amongst the Nobility and Gentry: Either they had none at all, or such as they were the worse for having; insomuch that those, whose Birth and Fortunes intitled them to be Legislators and Governors of Mankind, were themselves the Slaves and Dupes of Pedagogues and Chaplains, were contented to do all their Drudgery, and be humble Instruments to their Pride and Luxury.

However, as the Priests could not agree amongst themselves about sharing the Laity, and, as Printing about this Time came into *Christendom*, which made it impracticable to suppress all Copies of useful Books, or hinder them from being read; many Persons have had the Vertue and Resolution to oppose Clerical Usurpation, and have kept alive some Spirit of Liberty, in Spite of all the Efforts of Priestcraft and Delusion, ever supported by worldly Interest, and too often by worldly Power.

It is a hard Circumstance for Truth, that in most Countries it must subsist upon Converts; and Education, Interest and Authority must combine against it: But if, notwithstanding all their Efforts, its own clear Evidence and irresistible Authority can make such a Progress in the World, what might we not expect, if the Approaches and Passages to it were made easy and advantageous, and proper Rewards and Encouragements given
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to the Promoters and Discoverers of such Philosophy and Knowledge, as will make Men useful to themselves and their Country?


It cannot be doubted, but ancient Virtue and ancient Eloquence would revive again; the Nobility and Gentry of *Christendom* would resume their proper Stations; and exceed the inferior Part of Mankind, as much in publick Spirit, Courage and Wisdom, as they do in Fortune and Quality; and possibly might in Time as much outshine the *Greeks* and *Romans* in those great Endowments, as they are evidently outdone in such Arts and Sciences, as the Priests do not pretend to teach, and seldom know any Thing of.



NUMBER XXX.

Wednesday, August 10. 1720.

Of EDUCATION. *Part 2.*

OT all the Cruelty of Tyrants, the Subtilty and Craft of Priests, or the Malice of Devils, have ever invented or brought a greater Plague or Mischief upon Mankind, than false Learning: We may be upon our guard against all other Calamities; but here the Enemy is within us, and admitted at all times to the innermost Recesses of our Souls; where he acts the Part of a treacherous Friend, betrays us under the Pretence of serving us, and administers Poison in Cups of seeming Nectar and Ambrosia: We are gradually deprived of our Senses, whilst we think we are improving them; become Fools by Industry and great Application; like *Tantalus*, are starved with an imaginary Banquet at our Mouths; and, in the midst of an appearing

pearing Profusion of Knowledge, want common Sense; and, what is yet worse, are insensible of our wanting Distemper, and consequently are incapable of a Remedy.

Our Minds as well as Bodies are easily distorted, and put out of their natural Frame; Absurdity and Nonsense is to be learn'd, and good natural Faculties may be improved into foolish Ones, or none at all. A Man, like a Vessel, is capable of holding only a certain Quantity, which when it is full of one Liquor is incapable of receiving another; and even when the first is drawn out, it generally leaves a Tincture behind it. The Mind, when rightly set out, usefully employ'd, and upon proper Objects, will improve, and every Day strengthen; but when conversant only with Visions, Phantoms and Whimseys, will assimilate with the Company it keeps, and by Degrees looses its distinguishing Faculty.

A proper Exercise, and a natural Use of the Limbs, give Health and Vigour, as well as Gracefulness and becoming Motion; whereas Grimace and absurd Posture, are Qualifications only for Jack-Puddings and Merry-Andrews. One who has been long taught by an ill Master, is farther from a good Dancer, than another who has never begun; because he must unlearn all his ill Habits, to be in the Circumstance of him who has not learn'd at all; as a Man, who gets out of his Road, is farther from his Journey's End, than

if he had staid at Home; and commonly must return thither again, to find out his right Way.

Whoever spends his Time in reading foolish Books, and in studying useles or false Speculations, will grow the greater Coxcomb, the greater Progress he makes: He is learning backwards, and undermining and destroying the first Sparks, innate Principles, or Capacity of Knowledge, and in time will be fortify'd and impregnable against common Sense. A great Philosopher tells us, that Ignorance is a middle State between Knowledge and false Learning; that is to say, one who is wholly untaught and unimproved, is as much above a Learned Man, in the common Acceptation of the Word, as a Man well educated does exceed another who has had no Education at all: The Capacity of the first is entire, and susceptible of Information; whereas in the other, all the Avenues and Passages to Wisdom are destroy'd or lock'd up, and he is so puzzled, perplexed and confounded in a Maze of improved Nonsense and Absurdity, that he can never get through it or out of it. The Acquisitions in such Learning have been aptly compared to the fluttering and rumbling of a Swallow falling down a Chimney, who, when he is at Bottom, flies about, and hurries backwards and forwards to every Window, and every Corner of the Room, to make his Escape, but never thinks of the

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226 *The Independent Whig.*

Way he came in, and so becomes an easy Prey to the first Enemy which assaults him.

Whoever is conversant with Scholasticks, and has any Understanding of his own, (if such a Correspondence can possibly be) must readily assent to this Truth. It is even grown a Proverb in the Learned Language, that, *Merus Scholasticus est merus Asinus*: What an Appearance do these Reverend Drones and accomplish'd Dunces make amongst Mankind? How are they exceeded in Conversation, agreeable Address, and useful Knowledge, by the youngest Gentlemen, by Soldiers and Merchants, and often by Mechanics and Tradesmen, who can only write and cast Accompts? Nothing but the Solemnity of their Habits, and the austere Gravity of their Phiz, Mien and Behaviour, hinders them from being the Jest and Contempt of Women and Boys. It is said, *Villiers*, Duke of *Buckingham*, once took a Conceit to invite all the deep Chins about the Town to a magnificent Entertainment spread upon a long Table; and he made himself amends, by sitting at the upper End, and enjoying the Visto. Indeed I cannot deny, but I have sometimes had such a sort of ill-natur'd Pleasure, in imagining that I saw some of the Governors of the Two Universities (with others of their Betters, who shall be nameless) uncased of their reverential Robes, and dressed up with Hats and Feathers, Sword-knots, and laced Coats, and in that Equipage

page marching in solemn Dump, like a Call of Serjeants from *Temple-Bar* to *Westminster*.

They give us, in some Degree, the same Figure, when they shew in the Grand Monde: Like Snails, they carry their Houses about them, and bring Pedantry, Conceit, sour Humour, Bigotry, magisterial Grimace, and ill Manners, into all Conversations where they have to do; and indeed are not fit for any, till they have been often kick'd out of it. They have neither the Temper of Christians, the Reason of Philosophers, or the Affability of Gentlemen, and therefore are justly despised by them all. *Fryar John*, as I remember, asks of *Panurge* or *Pantagrouel*, in *Rabelais*, what is the Reason that the Household Priest is used worse than any one else in the Family? And, I think, he answers, because he neither ploughs the Ground like the laborious Ox, carries Burthens like the useful Horse, nor keeps the Door like the faithful Dog; but, like the Monkey, runs about every where fouling the House, chattering and making a Noise, biting People's Fingers, and doing nothing but Mischief; and so every Body has a Stroke at him, and gives him a Knock as he passes by.

The Writings of many of these solemn Gentlemen are of the same Kind, and carry the same tragical and grim Aspect. They would be Dictators in Faith and Science, and so their Books are full of the Spirit of Pe-

dantry, false Zeal, and Ill-breeding; and, under the Appearance and Affectation of Learning, contain only Paradoxes, Uncertainty, harsh Severity, or awkward Buffoonery. Any one, who is the least acquainted with these dogmatical Zealots, these punning Inquisitors, must own that I have done Justice to their Characters, and the Merit which runs through them; unless in some Instances, mostly about this great Town, where an uncommon natural Genius, Liberty of Mind, generous Birth, or a free Conversation, have got the better of a constrain'd and corrupt Education.

I thank God, such as have of late Years had the Honour of being admitted to great Dignities, and been brought into the Legislature or Royal Councils, are of the latter sort: But what Figure have others formerly made in the Senate House, or Council Board? How much below young Noblemen, who had never been at the Universities, or had just forgot what they had learned there, and rubb'd or filed off College Rust by polite Conversation? In One, you might have observed an Easiness of Address, Softness of Speech, and Freedom of Thought; in the Other, Starchness of Behaviour, Sourness of Looks, and starved Conceits, urged with fierce and impetuous Rage. A late Noble and great Genius of our Age and Country, compares them to those Grotesque Figures, and Dragon-Faces, which are often seen in
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the Frontispiece, and upon the Corner-Stones of old Buildings : They seem placed there as the Defenders and Supporters of the Edifice ; but with all their Grimace, are as harmless to People without, as they are useless to the Building within.

N U M B E R X X X I .

Wednesday, August 17. 1720.

Of C E R E M O N I E S .



LAINNESS and Simplicity are not more inseparable Marks of Truth, than they are of true Religion, which wants neither Paint nor Pageantry to recommend it self to the Hearts of Men. It wins the Affections, by the Force of its Perswasions ; and the Understanding, by the Reasonableness of its Precepts. It abhors Violence, as opposite to its Nature ; and despises Art and Policy, as below its Dignity. Human Ornaments may

230 *The Independent Whig.*

hide and disfigure, but cannot preserve nor improve its intrinsic Beauty, and divine Lustre : And Pomp and Grimace, as they are no wise a-kin to it, so neither are they the Effects of it, nor bring any Advantage to it. On the contrary, they tend to fill the Mind with gross Ideas, or sullen Fear ; and so create Superstition instead of Piety, and Farce instead of Worship.

God himself has told us, that he will be worshipped *in Spirit and in Truth* : which shews, that Love and Sincerity constitute Devotion, and that Religion resides in the Mind. As to Bodily Religion, and Corporeal Holiness, the Gospel is silent about them ; leaving every one at full Liberty to behave his own Way in the *Practice of Piety*.

It is justly esteemed the Glory and Felicity of the Christian Religion, that by it we are released from that grievous Yoke and Bondage of Ceremonies, which neither we nor our Fathers were able to bear. It is a Religion of Reason, void of all Superfluities, and trifling Impertinences.

Men cannot judge of one another's Thoughts and Inclinations, but by Words and Actions : And, because it would be both troublesome and silly to be on every Occasion haranguing our Friends and Superiors, upon the profound Veneration which we profess for their Persons or Characters ; it has become necessary to agree upon some outward

outward Forms, to denote internal Respect. And this I take to be the only good Reason which can be given for such Manner of Address or Ceremony. It is ridiculous, either by Sounds or Gestures, to tell a Man over and over again, what he knows already; and therefore, the most intimate Friends and old Acquaintance make but little Use of Shew or Complement; and those, who make most, are ever found the least sincere. But how senseless and absurd must it be to entertain Heaven with such Grimaces! that Heaven, which searches our Hearts, and knows our most hidden Thoughts; and will not be deceived by outward, arbitrary and fallacious Marks of inward Disposition!

It can never be conceived, that the All-merciful and Omniscient God should, by the sending of his Son, abolish, or suffer to be abolished, the whole *Jewish* Legion of Ceremonies, tho' appointed by himself in Person; and should graciously condescend to establish a new Dispensation, destitute of all Ceremony and exterior Grandeur; and yet should leave it to the Ambition of designing Men, or to the Folly of weak ones, to invent and impose a fresh Load of Rituals, in Opposition to the plain Genius of the Gospel. This would be for the All-merciful, to be merciful in vain; for the Creator to resign his Power to the Creature; and for God to recall his *own* Injunctions, which he once gave for a gracious and wise End, since ceas-

232 *The Independent Whig.*

ed, that *Men* may enforce their's, for a weak or a wicked one.

Nothing is, or can be, pure Religion, but either what God commands and tells us he will accept; or what is dictated by eternal Reason, which is the Law of Nature: And whatever is superadded, however dignified by a venerable Name, is no Part of true Religion; which, as has been said, can be supported by nothing but *Divine Revelation*, or *Divine Reason*. When both these are wanting, we wander in the Dark, and worship blindfold; being led by the Hand of Conjecture and Invention, which are uncertain and endless.

This is so true, that where-ever there is true Religion, there are few Ceremonies: And, on the other Hand, where Ceremonies abound, there Religion is either utterly lost, or miserably decayed; and, in Popish Countries, it is more or less visible, according as Ceremonies and Bigotry (which, like Cause and Effect, go always Hand in Hand) are more or less practised or promoted. Thus, in *France*, where, thro' the Commerce of that Kingdom with *Protestants*, there are still some Remains of common Sense, and consequently of Religion; God Almighty is worshipped as well as dead Men, tho' not so much: Whereas, in *Italy* and *Spain*, the Saints have deprived their Maker of all Devotion; and the *Blessed Virgin*, *St. Dominick*, *St. Jago*, and *St. Anthony*, are, by these
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hot-headed Bigots, made Governors of Heaven and Earth, and the Givers of eternal Life; and consequently are become, next immediately after the Priests, the only Objects of their Adoration. If you deprive them of their Saints and their Ceremonies, there is not the least Face of Religion left amongst them.

So little has Christianity gained by Ceremonies, that a great Part of Mankind have, by Adopting them, banished all true Religion. If they were introduced, as it is alledged, to kindle Piety; I am sorry to say, it has so happened, that this Heat of Devotion has quite drank up the Truth and Vitals of Religion; and the blind Compliance with a senseless Cringe, invented and enjoined by a Popish Priest, is made of more Importance and Merit, than the Possession of all Moral and Christian Vertues, without it. Religion, good Sense, and Humanity, are inseparable Friends; but a superstitious Fondness for Ceremonies is a Contradiction, and an Affront to all the Three.

The Teachers of Mankind have, for the greatest Part, been the most unteachable of all Men; and these our Guides to Peace have been always the Foremost to break it. They have seen, from Time to Time, the Violence and ungodly Effects produc'd by their Contention for Human Forms, Habits, and Decisions; and yet, where the *Religious Laity* and the *Law* did not interpose, to restrain

234 *The Independent Whig.*

restrain this Unchristian Behaviour in *Churchmen*, they have not only still adhered with Obstinacy to their Inventions and Impositions, but frequently made it their Business to broach new ones, and to throw about fresh Balls of Strife and Cruelty.

Ceremonies were first brought in under a very plausible Pretence; namely, that of aiding and promoting Religion: But we have seen, by above a Thousand Years Experience, that these its pretended Friends always become its real Rivals and successful Enemies; and, by the Help of those, whose Interest it was to contrive and support them at any Rate, never failed to banish it as far away as their Power extended.

It is pretended, that the Invention of stated Ceremonies and Garments, is justified by these Words of *St. Paul* to the *Corinthians*, *Let all Things be done decently, and in order*; which Words are only a Precept to avoid Immodesty and Confusion, in their religious Assemblies. Two, for Example, were not to speak at the same Time: One was not to sing Psalms, while another prayed. Neither Love nor Trade was to be the Business of their Meetings; nor Tithes and their own Power the Drift and Business of the Preachers: Christ was not to be confounded with *Belial*; nor Pride and Dominion with Meekness and Christianity: Exhorting was not to be mix'd with Railing, nor Praying with Cursing; nor were the People to be taught

to hate one another : In short, God was to be adored with the Heart and Affections, and not with a Fiddle, or a Pipe and Tabor.

I do not find, that the Apostle's Words were understood in any other Sense than this, by those to whom they were addressed : It does not appear that immediately upon the Sight of St. *Paul's* Epistle, the *Corinthians* concluded that Prayers should be said in Surplices ; and that the Faithful, as soon as the Word was given, should Kneel, stoop and stand, or turn to the Right or Left, like a File of Musqueteers ; or that they were to nod towards the East, as if the Almighty kept his Court only there.

Nor were the *Corinthians* directed by this Text to play *Popish* Tricks over the Forehead of a Babe baptized, as *sure and certain Signs* of Regeneration : Nor were they commanded to put up their Petitions in Quavers, and to sing their Prayers as well as say them ; nor was that subtle Distinction then and there found out, of bowing at the Name of *Jesus*, but not at the Name of Christ or of God.

All these pretty Fashions were unknown to the Apostle and his Correspondents ; and their Genteelness and *Significancy* have been long since discovered by the *Romish* Clergy in the later Days ; and indeed, it is now become impossible to make one's Court well without them.

The Words *Decorum* and *Significancy*, which are made use of to justify the Celebration

236 *The Independent Whig.*

bration of Ceremonies, are Words of such prodigious Latitude, that the World does not agree, nor ever can agree, what it is that does come properly under their Denomination, and what does not. With the *Turks* it is *decent* to be covered at Devotion; with *us*, to be bare-headed. How is the wearing of a Periwig, or a Cap, more *decent* and orthodox than the wearing of a Hat? How is a Prunella Gown, or a Lawn Frock more significant than a Cloth Coat? Is God Almighty better pleased with a Cambrick Band, than with a Muslin Cravat? And is an Organ-Loft more acceptable to him, than plain Country Piety, that has neither Motion nor Musick in it?

If Men are at Liberty to invent and enjoin *one* unnecessary Ceremony, why not *two*? And if two, why not two Thousand? When such a Power is once granted, it cannot be easily, nor indeed reasonably limited. If the Clergy can oblige me to throw my Head into my Bosom, upon their pronouncing certain Sounds; they may, by the same Right, upon pronouncing different Sounds, oblige me to run it against a Stone Wall: Nay, which is still worse, whoever has an Authority to direct my *Manner* of Worship, must have also a Power to direct the *Matter* of it, and may *command* me *WHOM* to worship as well as *HOW*.

Superstition in the People, and Power in the Priests, were the true Ends and Consequences

quences of creating *Popish* Ceremonies; for, as to their Significancy, it was a meer Bubble and Pretence. Such a Plea would justify endless Phrenzy and Fooleries; and every Madness would be made a Mystery. For Instance; we might be made to walk barefooted into the Church, to *signify* the Sanctity of the Place; and to crawl upon all Four out of it, to *signify* the Humiliation of our Hearts. A Match of Cudgel-playing every *Sunday* might be instituted, to *signify* our spiritual Warfare; and a Game at Blindman's-Buff, to *signify* the Darknes of our Understandings. In short, any Thing might be made to *signify* every Thing; and any Punishment be inflicted upon the profane *Gain-sayer*: And upon this Foot may be justify'd all the *Pagan* and *Popish* Fopperies that ever were, or ever could be invented; and nothing can be said against all the many Garments, and many Colours, and many antick Gestures used by the *Romish* Priests at this Day.

It must be evident to every intelligent Man, that all this pretty Pageantry and *Raree-Show*, can never make Men more acceptable to God, who will not be gratified or obliged by a Jigg or a Tune. But, I believe I may safely affirm, that if all this Merry-making and jovial Devotion in the *Popish* Churches do no manner of Good, they must needs do Harm; because they divert the Mind from deliberate Devotion and
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238 *The Independent Whig.*

calm Repentance, and can at best only work it up to a wild and enthusiastick Worship.

However, tho' this pompous Parade in Piety does no Service to Religion, it effectually answers the End proposed by it; and contributes vastly, as every Thing else does, to the Advancement and Grandeur of the *Romish* Clergy, as it turns Mens Thoughts from divine Objects to a superstitious Veneration for Postures, Habits, Grimaces, Cringes, Utensils, &c. all invented by Priests, who are always sure to appoint themselves Masters of the Ceremonies, and to be well paid for their deep Knowledge in this momentous Science: Besides, it lifts into their Service great Numbers of People; such as Organists, Fiddlers, Singing-Men, with all the piping and chanting Crew, as well as Artificers of various Kinds. It engages Men of Pleasure, and Ladies, in their Interests; and it catches the Mobility by the Ears and the Eyes, and sets them a staring; and it alleviates their own Drudgery of frequent Preaching and Praying: It also serves the Purposes of Interludes in the perpetual Tragedies they are acting; which they render less terrible, by playing, like *Nero*, upon their Harps, in the Midst of Conflagrations of their own making.

What a Blessing is it to this Church and Kingdom, that all this Farce in Devotion is forbidden by the *Act of Uniformity*, as well as by our *Homilies*; as shall be further taken Notice of, when I treat again upon the same Subject.

NUMBER XXXII.

Wednesday, August 24. 1720.

Of CEREMONIES. Part 2.



Y last Paper treated of superstitious Ceremonies; and this shall contain a Prosecution of the same Subject.

The Pagan Religion consisted altogether in a vast Number and Variety of strange and senseless Ceremonies; and, being foolish and false, it could consist of nothing else. Its Votaries had, for their Religious Task, certain frantick Actions to perform, certain wanton Motions to make, or certain mad Races to run; sometimes galloping about the Streets like Lunaticks, stark naked, and sometimes half naked; or in a religious antick Dress, *significantly* suited to their Behaviour. They were to be religious with their Heads, Feet, Joints, and their *other Organs*: They were

were also to utter certain harsh and devout Sounds, which had no Meaning, but were prodigious *significant*, and being very ridiculous, were very *decent*.

During all this holy Exercise, which was edifying in Proportion as it was mad, their Minds were possess'd with a drunken Festivity and Wantonness, or with Craziness and Enthusiastick Fear. They were either lewd or raving, Rakes or Fanaticks. It never entred into their Heads, nor did their Priests ever put it into them, that Religion was a sober Thing, consisting in the Exercise of Reason, and the Practice of Virtue. No ; a Spirit of Sobriety, or a Ray of Understanding, would have blown up the Authority and Dominion of the *Heathen Parsons* ; and therefore, the poor *Lay Pagans* were not suffered to know that a Man might be a religious Man, without being a good Dancer, and please God without Roaring and running Races.

This was the *Godly and wholesome Discipline*, invented and instituted by the *Pagan Clergy*, for the Use and Edification of the deluded and idolatrous World. *Action and Outside* was all they knew of Religion ; and therefore their Superstition took great Delight in building and beautifying Temples. They imagined, that the doing of a Thing which had any Reference to Religion, was actually a Piece of Religion ; and that any Jobb of Work about a Holy Place, was, in
good

good Earnest, a Jobb of Holiness. They might have as rationally believed, that Masons, Joyners, and Plaisterers, employed about a Temple, derived Piety and Merit from that Employment.

Had not Pagan Ceremonies (and *Pagans* were the first Inventers of Ceremonies) signified nothing, or rather something very bad, as indeed it was evident to every Eye, that they were either senseless or impious; our Saviour would never have instituted, as he did, a Religion without one Ceremony in it. The Religion of the Gospel is as pure from Fancies and Ceremonies, as from Pride and the Spirit of Dominion.

Our Blessed Saviour knew well, that the crafty and profane Priests, had, by their shameless Inventions and filthy Ceremonies, polluted or abolished all Religion; and therefore, in Mercy to Mankind, founded a Religion without Priests, and without Ceremonies: (as shall be fully shewn hereafter) For, it is to be observed, that while the Established Church of *Paganism* flourished, Priests and Ceremonies always flourished or increased together.

Such was the simple Institution of the Gospel: But when *Popery* began to Elbow out Christianity, Ignorance and Ceremonies were some of the Principal Engines by which it effected the same. For, as the Meekness of Christians was then converted into the Cruelty of *Barbarians*, and the Plainness of the

242 *The Independent Whig.*

Gospel into all the detestable Fopperies of *Paganism*; so Holiness of Heart was changed into Holiness of Posture; the Humility of Soul into bodily Bowings; the Worship of God into the Worship of *Bread*, and the piping of Organs: And the Clergy, as they had called themselves, were no longer cloathed with Meekness, but with *Surplices*, &c.

Nor was this mighty Revolution, this unnatural Transition from the Beauty and Gentleness of Christianity, to the unhallowed Spirit and abominable Rituals of the Heathens, at all hard or impracticable: The People had, by the Idleness, Insufficiency, and Debaucheries of the Ecclesiasticks, become corrupt and blind to the last Degree, and therefore ran readily and chearfully into every new Absurdity. Whatever the Bishop pronounced *decent*, though ever so vile or silly, his conforming Flock received as *Reverend* and *Edifying*. A gross and sensual Manner of Worship, suited best with the Grossness of their Understandings, and the Sensuality of their Minds. They had no Conception of the Spiritual Nature of the Gospel, and of that Evangelical Grace, which operates internally, and is wholly employed about the Soul, but produces neither Cringes, nor Dances, nor Grimaces.

A Religion therefore of Ceremonies, which is no Religion at all, agreed well with those Carnal Christians, who were taught to place all Religion in Ceremonies. When the ignorant

rant Vulgar are once persuaded that Ceremonies are good for any Thing, they come quickly to think them good for every Thing; and *the more, the merrier!* They are delighted with Shadows and Mystery, and *Hocus Pocus*. Ignorance, like every other Habit, is daily improving it self, and encreases in Strength as in Years; it delights to be still plunging into farther and deeper Darkeness. The less People understand, the more they stare; and because there is nothing in the Gospel but plain Piety, plain Reason, and plain Matter of Fact; therefore it can raise no Wonderment in them, and consequently no *pleasing Piety*: But strange and *mysterious* Ceremonies can do all this; and, for that Reason, have always got the better of Religion in all bigotted Countries.

Here therefore is a glorious and ample Field of Gaping, Sottishness, and Credulity, for crafty Priests to play their Tricks, and sow Superstition in. And, indeed, they have topped their Parts, in this Undertaking, with such Dexterity and Success, that their humble and resigned Votaries do not any longer pretend to carry their own Eyes or Understanding: Their very Palates and Noses are Priest-ridden, and dare neither Taste nor Smell, without an *Ecclesiastical Licence*. Thus even the invincible Operations of the Animal Spirits, and of the Five Senses, must stand still, when commanded by the Priest, who can annihilate the Creature, and create his Creator.

244 *The Independent Whig.*

As under the sacred Name of God and Religion, the greatest Irreligion and Impieties have been propagated ; so, under the Colour and Umbrage of *significant* and *decent* Ceremonies, the most ridiculous and immodest Usages have been introduced. It would require more than a whole Paper to expose all the many Apish Gesticulations of the *Romish* Mass ; I shall only run over a few of them.

The Priest, in the Administration of Mass, must wear a white Linnen Garment, which, I suppose, must signify *Whiteness* ; for I cannot see a more obvious Meaning in it. The same was also worn by the primitive Heathen Clergy, when they butchered Bullocks, to appease their Deities.

As he approaches towards the Altar, having great Devotion in his Back-Bone, he bows, and bows, and ducks his Head, as if he was playing at *Hop-Frog*. The Altar is also covered with a *Surplice*, or white Cloth, which, doubtless, signifies some great Mystery ; but, in profane Eyes, typifies only a Damask Table-Cloth. It moreover stands towards the East, which, to be sure, has a deep Meaning, and seems to imply, as if God Almighty was either more merciful or more powerful in that Quarter of the World, (though he made it All) than in any of the other Three ; or as if he liked that Climate best, and All those who bow to it.

He then, after many Monkish Gestures and Scrapings, says a world of short Prayers,

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The Independent Whig. 245

(the whole Service being judiciously sliced into pretty little Morfels of Devotion) and reads Scraps of Scripture; all which Prayings and Readings would not be half so Wholeſome any where elſe as they are juſt at the Elbow of the Altar. Then there is a lighted Candle ſtanding by him at Noon-Day, probably to ſignify that there is Light enough without it. Now, in ſome other Churches, the Altar is only illuminated with dark Candles, which, for ought I know, may be equally myſterious and ſignificant. But, upon this great and eſſential Point, I ſhall pronounce nothing dogmatically.

The Priest then mutters Words over the Bread and Wine, which thereupon ſtart into omnipotent Fleſh and Blood; and the living Jeſus is ſwallow'd Whole, in Remembrance of the dead One; and the Priest makes his Maker, and the People eat him. The Wine, which the Priest very naturally keeps all to himſelf, muſt not be poured out of a Bottle into a Glaſs, which would not be *ſignificant* enough; but out of a Flaggon, which, being of Silver or Gold and holding more Liquor, is conſequently very *ſignificant*. He repeats, *Lord have Mercy upon us*, very often, to *ſignify* that he does it more than once; and ſpeaks loud, to *ſignify*, that he may be heard.

But I am quite ſick of this ſtrange ſignificant Stuff, before I have gone thro' the Tenth Part of it. The whole Performance is perfect-

246 *The Independent Whig.*

ly Theatrical, and improperly and impiously called a Sacrament. It is indeed a wretched, unentertaining Interlude; a stupid Farce, of which the Priest is the Chief Mimick; for Mumbling and making Mouths, does not deserve the Name of *Acting*.

We have had several Attempts made to revive amongst us this infamous Mummery in Devotion, and these Apish Ceremonies; which are an Affront to Common Sense, and below the Dignity of Human Nature, much more of Religion: But such Attempts can never succeed, while we enjoy either Liberty or Knowledge. *Archbishop Laud*, therefore, when he had bewitched the Court, sway'd the Scepter, and destroy'd the Liberty of the People and of the Press, took the best Opportunity he could get, to transport *Rome* to *Lambeth*; and having married the *Harlot*, he adopted her Trumpery.

A Sample of this Man's Genius for Popery may be seen in his mad Manner of Consecrating some New Brick and Mortar which had been used in the Repair of *St. Catharine Creed-Church, London*; as the same is related at large by *Rushworth*. At his Approach to the West End of the Church, the Doors flew open, upon pronouncing certain Words out of the *Psalms*, *That the King of Glory might enter*; and then entered the Bishop, and falling down upon his Knees, Baptiz'd the Ground, or, which is the same Thing, pronounced it Holy, *in the Name of the Father,*
Son

Son, and Holy Ghost. Then he threw Dust in the Air, and play'd some other pious Pranks. Then he pronounced many Curses, and called upon the People to Curse with him. Then he scatter'd a Basket-full of Blessings amongst all the Masons, and other Holy Mechanicks, who had helped to make that Church fine. He also went round the Church in Procession, and told God Almighty and the People, over and over, that that was Holy Ground. At last, after a Bead-Roll of Prayers, and a Hundred and Fifty Bowings, and after many wild Gestures, sometimes advancing, sometimes recoiling, like One affrighted and crazy, he gave the Sacrament.

Besides all this, he removed the Communion-Table, and placed it in the Chancel Altar-wise, contrary to the express Direction of the Rubrick; which says, it shall stand where Morning and Evening-Prayer is directed to be said. He made Pictures of the Trinity, and caused them to be hung up in Churches; and was guilty of many other Popish Innovations, all tending to create Fanaticism and Superstition.

This Paper grows too long, and leaves me no Room to do Justice to Crosses, Square-Caps, and Fantastical Garments: all which, I warrant you, are profoundly Myste-
rious; tho' to Carnal Eyes, they seem only to *signify* to make the People stare: For every odd Sight strikes the Imagination, and disposes the Beholder either to Laughter or Reverence.

248 *The Independent Whig.*


Nor have I Time to honour with a proper Encomium, that Ingenious and Ecclesiastical Device, of explaining the sublime Mystery of the Trinity by a Pair of Compasses, tho' it is above all Explication, and even of Conception, unless thro' Faith; and of representing the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, by a Triangle in a Circle, over the Communion-Table. Was there ever such a pretty Piece of pious Cunning! By the said Triangle is typify'd and held forth to us, that the said Triangle consists of Three Angles; which is exceeding plain and edifying: And by the Circle is signified, that the said Circle is but One Circle, which is prodigious good again! But, that a Triangle is a Circle, and a Circle is a Triangle, Dr. *Waterland* saith not.

I must, for the same Reason, pass over unobserved, the Praising of God with Organs, which our Homilies very uncivilly call Superstitious; Cuts in the Common-Prayer Books, tending to prepare People for Idolatry; and Pictures in Churches, for the same devout Purpose.

N U M B E R X X X I I I .

Wednesday, August 31. 1720.

*The Ignorance of the High-Church
Vulgar, and its Causes.*

 Have always thought the best constituted Church in the World to be that, which forms and produces the most religious and most rational Members. Churches are Places where Men are, or should be, taught the Love of God, and of Vertue; and when People have been long used to perform divine Discipline, and, as they imagine, receive Instruction in Moral and Evangelical Duties, in these stately Fabricks, they generally conceive a deep Reverence and Devotion for the Buildings themselves, and for every Thing that is said in the them, as well as a great Opinion of the Wisdom and Sanctity of the Teachers, who preside there, and dictate *ex Cathedra*: They
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esteem them as Persons sent by God himself, to deliver a Message from his own Mouth; for which also they have often the Word of the Preacher—No small Reason to *the many* for the believing of it!

So that here is an uncontrollable Prepossession in Favour of every Doctrine, or every Dream, which corrupt Priests shall think fit to deliver. And indeed, the High Church Clergy have never failed to make their Advantage of this superstitious Awe and Credulity of their Hearers; and to sanctify every Falshood, and every Whimsy and Impiety uttered by them, with a misapply'd or perverted Text of Scripture; and so prostituted and prophaned the high and holy Name of God, to patronize their Impostures. I shall give some Instances.

When they have had a Mind to flatter a cruel or a foolish Prince, in order to make him serve their Purposes, and do their Drudgery; they have dubbed him instantly *God's Vice-gerent*, tho' he acted at the same Time by the Instigation of his Lust or of Satan. And, because *David* and *Saul*, being appointed by God himself, by Word of Mouth, were called the *Lord's Anointed*; therefore every Tyrant, who was not appointed by God himself, but seized a Crown by Violence or Surprise, became also the Lord's Anointed. And because *Adam* was the Father of his own Son, therefore he was the King of his own Son; and therefore all such Kings, who

The Independent Whig. 251

who had not *Adam* for their Father, were nevertheless, in Right of *Adam*, Kings and Fathers of their Subjects, who yet were not their Children, but for all that owed them the Duty of Children, whilst they were plundering and ruining them; and all the Rapine and Murthers they were prompted to commit, by their Anger or their Avarice, were called the *Ordinances of God*, and were to be submitted to, with *Christian Stupidity*, on pain of Damnation; that is, it was made Damnation to resist Actions and Cruelties which deserved Damnation: And as you were to submit to Law and Justice, on pain of Damnation, so ought you to submit to the overturning of all Law, and all Justice, on pain of Damnation also. And, because when we have any Matter of Complaint, we are bid to acquaint the Church with it; therefore the People, who are the Church, are, in every Case, to be determin'd by the Parson of the Parish, who is not the Church. And, because we are to confess our Sins one to another; therefore we are to do it to a Priest, which is not doing it to one another. And because *Abraham* gave the Tenth of his Plunder to *Melchisedeck*, who was not a Priest of our Church by Law Establish'd; therefore our Establish'd Priests, who have nothing to do with *Melchisedeck*, nor know any thing of him, have a Divine Right to the Tenth Part of every Man's Estate and Industry. And, as the Tribe of *Levi* had a Right to Tythes, tho' they
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and their Tythes are long since abolished; so ought our Parsons to have the same Tythes by the Gospel, without being in the least akin to *Aaron's* Person, or Heirs to his Estate, or Successors to his Institution. And, though our Saviour's Kingdom is not of this World; yet the Kingdom of the High Clergy, who, if you will take their Words for it, are his Representatives, is, and ought to be, of this World. And, because the reprobate and gluttonous Monks had, by endless Rogueries, and diabolical Lies, plundered the deluded Laity of their Possessions, and engrossed to themselves most of the Lands of *England*; therefore our modern High Priests have a *natural* and *hereditary* Right to enjoy the same; And, tho' they have, upon Oath, renounced all Power, and all Pretence to Power, but what the Law vouchsafes to grant them; yet they have a Power independent on the Law, and Principles independent on these very Oaths, tho' renounced by these very Oaths.

All these, and many more Absurdities, equally vile and impudent, have been blasphemously father'd upon Scripture, and the Author of Scripture; tho' they all contradict the Scripture, as well as they do common Sense and common Honesty. But as the Vulgar do always take that to be the highest Point of Religion, about which their Teachers make the most Noise, for the Time being, whether it be Tythe, or Dr. *Sacheverel*, or the *Pretender*, or the late Duke of *Ormond*,

The Independent Whig. 253

Ormond, or King *Charles the First* ; so vicious and corrupted Clergymen, on their Part, have always tacked the Name of God, or, which is much more powerful with the Mob, the Name of the *Church*, to any Assertion, or any Claim, or any Invention of theirs, be it ever so monstrous or mischievous ; and instantly it becomes, with weak People, an Article of Faith, upon which Salvation it self depends. For, as it is their first Care, to force a Testimony from Heaven for every Whim, or Forgery of theirs ; so their next Concern is, to make every Contradiction and Opposition to it, damnable.

Hence it comes to pass, that the same Vertues are not of the same Importance at all Times ; but Vertues are made Vices, and Vice is made Vertue, just as the present Temper, or the present Views prevail ; and, by corrupt Priests, Things are often taught under the Name of Christianity, which are opposite to the Nature of Christianity : Religion is pretended, and Power meant. In consequence of this, Duty is converted into Sin, and Sin into Duty. Thus, the worshipping of God according to one's Conscience, without which there can be no Worship, is made by the High Church Priests a damnable Sin ; and the not worshipping a Table in the Chancel, tho' in Opposition to one's Conscience, is as bad. Sometimes the *resisting of unlawful Power*, is certain Damnation ; and sometimes the *not rebelling against*

254 *The Independent Whig.*

gainst the most lawful Power, has the same terrible Penalty annexed to it. To doubt or deny their uncharitable, unintelligible Explanations of Mystery, which cannot be explained, is the most heinous Atheism; and to whip a seditious, forsworn Priest, is crying Infidelity, and a Wound to Christ, through the Sides of his Ambassador.

At one time, *Predestination* is of high Consequence, and made an *Article of Faith*, and all *Free-Willers* shou'd be banished the Land, or locked up in Dungeons, like wild Beasts; which was the Judgment of the Bishops in King *James* the First's Days, concerning the *Arminians*. At a different Season, when Preferments run high on t'other side, as in King *Charles* the First's Reign, and ever since; *Arminianism* not only recovers Credit, but grows modish, and consequently *Orthodox*; while *Predestination* becomes an old fashioned Piece of Faith, and a sure Sign of *Fanaticism*; and yet it continues one of the 39 Articles, and yet it must not be believed, and it must be signed and assented to with a sincere Assent.

In all these Marches and Counter-marches, the Passions of too many of the People keep Place with those of the High Priests; and they are constantly disposed to be Slaves or Rebels, Free-Willers, or no Willers, Believers of this, or Believers of that, [just as Almighty High Church commands them.

Such Men do not pretend to teach their People the Meekness of Christianity:—No, their

The Independent Whig. 255

their Zeal is to be Anger, and their Religion Cruelty. That Fierceness, which is inconsistent with the Spirit of a Christian, is to be the certain Criterion of one whom they call a *true Churchman*; and that Mercy, which is inseparable from the Gospel, is inconsistent with the Temper of High Church. Their Votaries are not taught to be *Christians*, which wou'd spoil the Project, but *High Churchmen*; and instead of an Army of Martyrs, they are to be an Army of Martyr-makers: Nor is any Portion of Knowledge fit for them; for That might endanger the Loss of their Vassalage; and the teaching them to know for themselves, might extinguish their Zeal, and entirely change their Belief and Behaviour. The poor People are, in short, by such Guides taught to be ignorant, and to let others know for them: They must give up common Sense, to learn their Duty; and abandon Christianity, without which they cannot have the Grace of God, to embrace rigid Conformity, which is neither a Sign, nor a Cause of that Grace, but often a Bar and a Contradiction to it. This is so true, that whoever can reconcile *Human Authority* to *Christian Charity*, may reconcile Water and Fire, or do any other Impossibility.

Tenderness and Moderation to those who devoutly differ from us, though they are evident Principles and Duties of Christianity, and even the Result of Reason, Justice, and Hu-

256 *The Independent Whig.*

Humanity, yet are never mentioned by the Mouth of Orthodoxy, but as Terms of Contempt or Reproach: Infomuch, that a pious Indulgence to Men of a different Communion, the most honest, virtuous, inoffensive Men; and an Indulgence for the invincible, and perhaps rational Perswasions of the Mind, is the common Butt of Satire, and either ridiculed or reviled; whilst Men of the same Side may go what Lengths they will in Violence and Villany, without Anger or Rebuke: And while one Man shall have his House burned, his Brains beat out, and his Family ruined, for having a scrupulous Conscience, which is much more offensive than none at all; another Man shall break all the Ten Commandments with Reputation.

Hatred and Bitterness of Spirit, are the first Lessons which the unhappy People are taught by such Men; and the Gospel must be laid aside, and good Nature be extinguish'd, before modern Orthodoxy can be swallowed, or modern Zeal infused. Some of them may probably have learned to repeat the *Catechism* by Rote, and even to have practis'd profound Respect and Submission to their *Spiritual Superiors*; but for the great and indispensable Duties of Religion, how can it be expected they should mind them, while they daily see their Teachers express a much more warm Concern for their own Dignities and Revenues, than for the Honour and Interest of pure unmix'd Religion, which was
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ever highest when Ecclesiastical Power and Ecclesiastical Excise were lowest.

When a Congregation sees the Doctor much warmer against Dissenters, than against Sin, and not half so zealous for the absolute Necessity of a virtuous and sober Life, as for the absolute Necessity of a rigid Conformity; what can they conclude, but either that he banters them, or that a stupid Compliance with him, and a raging Resentment against Nonconformists, are the great Duties of Churchmen? Add to this, that if his Life be vicious, such a Conclusion is still the more natural to vulgar Understandings. When they see Church Power so violently contended for, and Gospel Holiness so little regarded, or so easily dispensed with; what can their stupid Understandings infer, but that a blind Submission to the Ecclesiasticks, is beyond all Evangelical Grace, and every Moral Virtue? They find by daily Experience, that they may commit Drunkenness or Whoredom, with Impunity, or a small Expence; but if they do not give the Doctor what he calls his Due, even to the last Sheaf of Corn, or the last Pound of Wool, they are expos'd in the Pulpit, harassed in the Bishops Court, and probably, at last, surrendered to Satan and Damnation.

Besides, they oftner hear Texts quoted, in some Pulpits, to abuse Separatists, than to recommend Godliness and Vertue; and see the Mode of performing a Duty more ve-

hemently urged, than the Duty it self: Thus kneeling at the Lord's Supper, is made by many of equal Importance with the Sacrament it self; and the Cross in Baptism must no more be parted with, than the Ordinance of Baptism.

It is therefore no wonder that the Affections and Antipathies of the common People, have neither proper Causes nor proper Objects, and that they neither love the Gospel as such, nor hate Sin as such; but form their Faith and Devotion upon the Word and Behaviour of their Priests, who have the keeping of their Religion, their Zeal, and their Passions; and what hopeful Use they make of this terrible Dominion, we all know: For indeed the Christian Religion is not so much as known to the High Church Vulgar, nor suffered to be known; and as little do they feel, or are suffered to feel, the tender Impulses of good Nature and Humanity, but possess an Implacableness of Spirit, as opposite to the Spirit of *Christ*, as was the Spirit of *Mahomet* to that of *Moses*.



NUMBER XXXIV.

Wednesday, September 7. 1720.

Of F A S T I N G.



N my 27th Paper, I have made a Dissertation upon *Fasting*; in this I shall continue it.

Monsieur de Fontenelle, in his *History of Oracles*, tells us, from *Philostrophus*, that the Oracle of *Amphiaraus* in *Attica*, deliver'd its Answers in Dreams; and that those who consulted it, must first fast well, in order to dream well: But when Fasting failed to produce a Phrenzy of Brain, and by it the Meaning of the God, who had no other Way of ascending into the Head, but upon the Fumes arising from empty Bowels; then the Priest helped his Master to bring forth a Dream, by wrapping up the devout Querist in the Skins of Victims, which being rubb'd and impregnated with intoxicating Drugs, disposed him to dream most divinely,

and fill'd his Noddle with very hopeful Prophecy. This satisfy'd the believing Querist, saved the Credit of the God, and brought pretty Offerings to his *Vicar*.

Such Use did the *Pagan* Priests make of the Duty of Fasting; and that the *Romish* Priests have perverted it to as wicked and deceitful Purposes, I have shewn in another Paper. It is agreeable to their Cunning and their Avarice, to make the People poor and mad; and it must be own'd a pretty priestly Art, that of driving Men out of their Estates and their Understandings with their own Consent; and leading them into a Belief, that Starving is a Duty, and Lunacy is Grace.

By the Law of Nature, we are not obliged to fast at all, unless in the Way of Physick, when we are ill, thro' an Overfulness of the Vessels, or any other Disorder, which may be removed or lessened by Abstinence. In this Case, we ought to fast for our Health sake; and whatever is necessary for Self-Relief, or Self-Preservation, becomes also a Duty, and a Piece of Natural Religion, when it does not contradict a positive Law of God. But to abstain, upon certain Days, from the comfortable Use of God's good Creatures, which ought to be received with Thankfulness, out of a vain Pretence to please Him, or to promote our own Salvation, is a strange and barbarous Chimera, which the Law of Nature abhors; and can be the Effect of nothing

thing but Distraction in the People, or Craft in the Priests. We might as rationally imagine, that going naked at certain severe Seasons of the Year, would draw us nearer Heaven; and that the afflicting our Skins with Frost and Snow, would do great Service to our shivering Souls; and that tho' Self-Preservation be an essential Law of Nature, yet Self-Destruction is also an essential Law of Nature.

Fasting, therefore, being no Part of the Law of Nature, the *Jewish* Law of Ceremonies, which is abolished, cannot make it a Duty: And for the Examples of Fasting, taken from the Prophet *Daniel*, and other Holy Men of the Old Testament; they were either voluntary, such as any one may perform when he is in a fasting Humour, which no Body pretends to restrain; or they were the Effect of Sorrow, when Grief had destroyed Appetite, and then there was no Devotion in them; or they were extraordinary and supernatural, and being inimitable, cannot be necessary. Miraculous Fasting cannot be a Duty, where the Gift of Miracles is not given.

As to the New Testament, there is not a stated Fast appointed in it: We are indeed commanded to fast and pray; but we are nowhere told how much, or how often, we are to do either; but are left to choose proper Occasions, and proper Inclinations, for doing both. *St. Paul* is such a generous Advo-

cate for Liberty of this Kind, that he condemns all those who condemn others for taking it. *Let not, says he, him that eateth, despise him that eateth not: And let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. One Man esteemeth one Day above another: Another esteemeth every Day alike. Let every Man be fully persuaded in his own Mind.* (Rom. Ch. xiv. v. 3 and 5.) The same Spirit of Charity, and the same good-natur'd rational Advice, runs thro' the whole Chapter.

The Institution of *Lent* was founded upon our Saviour's Fast of Forty Days in the Wilderness; as if weak impotent Mortals could imitate the Omnipotent Son of God, in Works done but by divine Power! They might as well pretend to walk upon the Sea once a Year, or to raise the Dead at all Times; Besides, our Saviour perform'd this Fast but once, and his Apostles never, as far as we know. *Once a Twelve-month you must keep Lent*, is not a Gospel Precept.

No Society, therefore, of Men can enjoyn any Time, or Measure, of Fasting (except where the Law directs the same) without departing from the Gospel, and contradicting St. *Paul*, and setting up their own Authority in Defiance of both the Gospel and the Saint. Such an Injunction would be impracticable, and even cruel. To many Constitutions it might be dangerous, and even fatal; and to all

all Men, it would render Life wretched and burthensome. The good God has no where commanded frail Men to worship him with Pain and Sicknefs of Body, nor to hasten their own Death by the Means of their Devotion. This would be to represent him as delighting in human Misery, and human Sacrifices; a sort of Worship suitable to the terrible Spirit of *Moloch*, or any other *Dæmon*, but no wise acceptable to the God of Mercy, and *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

The Popish Priests know well, that it is intirely impossible that all Men should comply with this their Discipline of Hunger, and perhaps that very Impossibility is their best Reason for maintaining it. It is certain that from hence they draw vast Gain, by hiring out Dispensations for Eating on the Days of Fasting; and the Lucre they make by breaking the Canon, is an unanswerable Argument for defending it. No Man is denied the Privilege of breaking *Lent*, who can pay for breaking it. He who cannot fast at all, may, for a competent Fee, eat Fish, which is a more luxurious Diet than Flesh; and he who cannot fast upon Fish, may, for a more competent Fee, fast upon a Belly-full of Roast-Beef; which, tho' a chaster Sort of Food than Fish, is more strictly forbidden by that Church.

Indeed, such are the vast Fees arising to the Popish Church, from Licences for a Li-

berty to eat, when it is a Duty to fast, that the whole Institution of Fasting *there*, seems only a religious Roguery, design'd for starving the People, to feed the Priests. For my self, I think the Parson has so little to do with this Matter, that I do not think any Direction ought to be taken about Fasting, but from our Constitution, or our Physician. If it be our Duty to fast on certain Days, no Tribe of Priests can dispense with the Pleasure and the Laws of Almighty God; tho' it is a Task which (for Money) they never refuse: And if it be not our Duty, it is insolent and wicked in them to command what neither God nor Nature requires; and it is in us a Sin and a Folly to obey them. Even the Protestant Priests, long since the Reformation, have known how to make the right Use of this Power. I my self have seen several formal Dispensations, signed by *Archbishop Sheldon*, under the Archbishopal Seal, to Licence the eating of Flesh in *Lent*; which Dispensations, I presume, were not granted without Application and Fees.

Religion is a voluntary Thing; it can no more be forced than Reason, or Memory, or any Faculty of the Soul. To be devout against our Will, is an Absurdity; and it is ridiculous in others to hope to make us so, in Spite of our selves. We have no Power over the Appetites of others, no more than over their Consciences. Neither a Man's Mind, nor
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his Palate, can be subject to the Jurisdiction of another; and whoever takes upon him to regulate one's Throat and Stomach, and direct one how much to swallow, may (with equal Reason) assume Dominion over the other Offices of Nature, and dictate how much one ought to discharge. If Fasting is good and pious, because it afflicts and mortifies the Human Spirit and Frame; a Surfeit, or a Debauch, or a Kick on the Guts, or a broken Leg, must be good and pious, for the same Reason, if given or taken with the same View.

As Fasting ought to be left to every Man's Discretion, because every Man is the best Judge of his Constitution and his Conscience, so ought it to be exercised with exceeding Care and Caution; otherwise it will be apt to sour our Tempers, or disorder our Heads, and probably do both. Now, neither Ill-Nature, nor Enthusiasm, is any wise related to true Religion; far otherwise, they are the greatest Enemies it has. A bitter Spirit, and a raving Brain, may be occasioned or increased by Fasting; but Christianity neither produces them, nor owns them. We may fast our selves into Peevishness, and call it *Christian Zeal*; and into the Vapours, and call the Wind in our Heads, *Inspiration*: But, by all this, we only shew that we know nothing, at least possess nothing, either of *Inspiration* or *Zeal*.

266 *The Independent Whig.*

But this same immoderate Fasting does not only render People whimsical and passionate, and has consequently helped to give Birth to many ridiculous and uncharitable Principles of Divinity, which have infatuated and enflamed Mankind ; but it also creates narrow Thoughts, and an abject Poorness of Spirit ; and renders the Mind prone to Delusion and Slavery. It is manifest, that a moderate Use of the Blessings and Enjoyments of Life, of which Eating and Drinking are not the least, has a wonderful Tendency to create or improve a good and beneficent Disposition of Heart ; which, in my Opinion, is as absolutely necessary to Devotion, as to good Neighbourhood. I can never think that Ill-Nature, or Baseness of Mind, can be an acceptable Oblation to the Wise and Merciful God ; or that Religion shou'd command what common Sense forbids. I must own, I am always best pleas'd after a good Meal, and therefore best dispos'd to love God and my Neighbour, which is the Sum of both Tables : I feel, at the same Juncture, the Love of Liberty, and the Spirit of *Whiggism*, strongest in me. And if Eating and Drinking makes us thus bold for our Constitution, let us, we beseech you, in the Name of publick Spirit, promote moderate Eating and Drinking.

It is a Principle in Politicks, that a Happy People will never bear a Tyrannical Prince : He must therefore make his Subjects

jects wretched, before he can make himself absolute. And this Principle holds equally true, in the Business of *Church Dominion*. The Laity must be Fools, before they can think the Priests to be Oracles ; and they must be Slaves, before they can think the Priests to be Lords. Here then is an unanswerable Reason, taken from the standing Rules of Ecclesiastical Polity, why the Lay Beasts of the People, as Mr. *Lesley* kindly calls us, should be always kept senseless, always starving. I would therefore entreat all my loving Countrymen, that, as they love their Liberty and the Protestant Religion, they would love their Victuals.



N U M B E R X X X V .

Wednesday, September 14. 1720.

Of R E A S O N .



R E A S O N is the only Guide given to Men in the State of Nature, to find out the Will of God, and the Means of Self-preservation. The Senses are its subordinate Instruments and Spies: They bring it Intelligence; and it forms a Judgment, and takes Measures, according to the Discoveries which they make. It compares Things one with another, and chooses them, if they are good; or neglects them, if they are indifferent; or shuns them, if they are bad. It discovers a first Cause, the Maker, Contriver, and Preserver of all Things; and therefore it teaches Submission to his Will, Admiration of his Wisdom and Power, and Thankfulness for his Goodness and Mercy. It distinguishes Subjects from
Slaves;

Slaves; and shews the Loveliness of Liberty, and the Vileness of Vassalage: It shews that, as to political Privileges, all Men are born equal; and consequently, that he who is no better than others, can have no Right to command others, who are as good as himself; unless for the Ends of their own Interest and Safety, they confer that Right upon him, during *their* good Pleasure, or *his* good Behaviour.

REASON has invented all *Science*, pointed out all Commerce, and framed all Schemes for social Happiness. It has polished Mankind, set the *Greeks* above the *Barbarians*, and the *Romans* above the *Greeks*. It has been observed, in Praise of its great Power and Excellency, by a celebrated Moralist, that *we have not sufficient Strength to follow our Reason as far as it would carry us.*

To REASON we are beholden for all the Comforts and Conveniencies of Life, next after the first Author of them; and for our Defence against the Assaults of Beasts of Prey, and of one another; and for our Shelter from the Inclemencies of uncertain Weather, freezing us, or scorching us, according to the different Seasons of the Year. The Earth, with all its Abundance, affords but rude and unpleasing Entertainment, without the Dexterity and Refinements of Reason. Thus, even the Gifts of *Nature*, before they arrive at us, and are made fit for our Use, become

become also the Gifts of REASON. Without REASON, we had lived like the *Brute Creation*, upon raw Fruit, tasteless Herbs, and the cold Spring; or exposed to the merciless Jaws of Famine, when a severe Winter had frozen up the Stores of the Earth, and locked the Waters under Ice.

REASON checks tumultuous Passion, the greatest Enemy to the Peace of the Mind, and to the Peace of Society. Hence it has been observed, by the same Moralist, that all our *rational Pursuits* are *temperate Pursuits*; and that what we pursue with REASON, we never pursue *with Violence*. REASON subdues Anger, and prevents Cruelty; it makes a Man less fierce than a Lyon, and less ravenous than a Bear. It is not *human Shape*, but human Reason, that places a *Man* above the *Beasts* of the Field, and lifts him into a Resemblance with God himself. Hence it is justly stiled *Divinae particula Auræ*; *A Ray, or Impulse of the Divinity*. And, in what Sense can a Man be said to be *made after the Image of God*, unless by his possessing that REASON, which is a *divine Particle of the GOD HEAD*? We resemble not our MAKER in *Person* or *Complexion*; and therefore can only resemble him in REASON, and in *Mercy*, which is the Child of this *Divine Reason*.

Were we not *rational Creatures*, we could not be *religious Creatures*, but upon a Level with *Brutes*, to whom God has made no
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Revelation of himself, because they want Reason to discern it, and to thank him for it. *Revelation* therefore presupposes *Reason*, and addresses it self to *Reason*; and God himself, by perswading us, as he does in his Word, by the Voice of *Reason*, appeals to our *Reason*. We cannot glorify God but with our Understandings; and we are convinced of his Goodness before we adore it. To praise him, without *Reason*, is a Contradiction, and an Impossibility. The Devotion which he requires, must be *free, rational* and *willing*; and where it is not so, it is *Folly* or *Hypocrisy*.

Nor is there any Opposition between *Reason* and *Grace*, whatever some may weakly, or dishonestly, maintain. In Truth, *Grace* is never given, but where *Reason* was already given; and the former *cannot* subsist, where the latter *does not*. We may have worldly Wisdom without Piety; but cannot possess Piety without Understanding; nor does *Grace*, tho' given in the greatest Abundance, at all supply the ordinary Offices of Reason. We do not find that St. *Luke* was a better Physician, for having written a *Gospel*; or St. *Paul* a better *Sailor*, or better *Tent-Maker*, for being an *Apostle*. But neither could St. *Luke* have been an *Evangelist*, nor St. *Paul* an *Apostle*, unless God had given them *Reason* as well as *Grace*. Indeed they are both the Gifts of God; only the One is *ordinary*, and the Other is *extraordinary*.

272 *The Independent Whig.*

REASON, even without the Light of *Revelation*, teaches us to investigate Nature, and praise God for the Wonderfulness of his Works. It must judge of Revelation it self, what is so, and what not; and of the Words and Language, in which the Holy Oracles were at first convey'd; and of the Words and Language into which they were afterwards translated. Now Words, many of them, being obscure or equivocal, and signifying different Things to different Men, it is left to our Reason to determine, in what Sense these Words are to be understood. The Spirit of God has invented for us no *new Ones*, or such as carry in their Sound certain and determinate Ideas, which cannot be mistaken, but must *infallibly* be the same to every Man.

By the *Light* of REASON we see about us. It warns us against Craft, and arms us against Force; and the same *Reason*, which commands us to believe in God *implicitly*, and obey him *passively*, does also command us to trust to no Man without Inquiry, and to submit to no Man without Cause. Thus, what is our Duty in Relation to God, would be Madness in Relation to one another: The good GOD cannot deceive us; but MEN have Pride, Folly, Interest and Complexion, all conspiring to deceive themselves and others.

Our first Attempt to make Converts, is an Appeal to their REASON, by which they are to judge *for themselves* of the *Reasonableness* of our Religion, and of the Argu-

ments which we bring for the Defence and Recommendation of our Religion : Which Method would be exceeding absurd and dishonest, if we did not suffer them to judge of our Religion with the same Freedom, after they are come into it, as they did before they embraced it. This would be Trepanning one's Reason into Captivity, with its own Assistance ; first to make *use* of it, and then to vote it useless : A strange inconsistent Piece of Treachery, and a flat Contradiction to that *Liberty with which CHRIST has made us free !* As if we were to receive any *System* upon the Grounds of our *Reason*, without which it never can be sincerely receiv'd, and then to reject *our Reason* upon the Grounds of our *System* !

Pray, how do we distinguish the Beauty and Truth of the *Gospel*, from the Imposture and Absurdity of the *Alchoran*, but by our *Reason* ? How do we detect the impudent and senseless Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*, but by our *Sense* and *Reason* ? Why did we, or how could we, leave *Popery*, and embrace the *Reformation*, but because our own *private Reason* told us ; and *Scripture*, of which we made *our selves* the *Judges*, told us ; that we left Slavery, Falshood, and Cruelty, for Truth, Freedom and Innocence ? How did our *Saviour* prove himself *the Son of God*, but by Miracles, which every Eye saw, and every Ear heard ? He appealed to the *Sense* and *Reason* of Mankind ; and all

274 *The Independent Whig.*

were convinced, that would be convinced. How do we know the Scripture to be the Word of God, but by the Deductions and Information of *Reason*? How can we prove our own Church, *as by Law established*, to be the *purest and best constituted Church in the World*, but by the Testimony of impartial, *disinterested* REASON? For, it is plain, from the great Number of *Gain-sayers*, and *Arians*, that her *genuine Sons* have not the miraculous Gift of inspiring, *from above*, all Men with their own *Orthodox* Sentiments. How can we distinguish Religion from Enthusiasm; Grace from Superstition; Faith from Credulity; the Love of the Church from the Love of Power; and the Authority of God from the Impositions of Men; but by *Reason*, or by the *Scripture*, interpreted by *Reason*?

In short, all who are Friends to TRUTH, are Friends to REASON, the Discoverer and Champion of TRUTH; and none are Foes to *Reason*, but those who have *Truth* and *Reason* for their Foes. He, who has dark Purposes to serve, must use dark Means: Light would discover him, and Reason expose him: He must endeavour to shut out both; and make them look frightful, by giving them ill Names; for farther than Names the Vulgar inquire not.

From this Cause, Religion and Liberty flourish, where *Reason* and Knowledge are encouraged; and where-ever the latter are stifled,

stified, the former are extinguished. In *Turkey*, Printing is forbid, *Enquiry* is dangerous, and *Free-speaking* is CAPITAL; because they are all inconsistent with the *MAHOMETANISM* by Law established. Hence it comes to pass, that the wretched *Turks* are all stupidly ignorant, are all Slaves, all Infidels. Nor have the *Papists* much Advantage to boast above the *Mahometans*. Their Guides and Governors lock up from them the Scripture, which is the Book of Knowledge: They teach them, that *Ignorance is the Mother of Devotion*: They banish Liberty, they brow-beat *Reason*, they persecute Truth. In Consequence of all which, the deluded Votaries of the *Romish Church* are as ignorant as the *Mahometans*, as great Slaves, greater Idolaters, and greater Persecutors; that is, they exceed the *Turks* in their Barbarity, who exceed most others.

Here, in *England*, why are we free, why *Protestants*; but because we are guided by *Reason*, and judge for our selves? And none amongst us complain of the *Liberty of the Press*, or the *Growth of Free-Thinking*, but those who would found a Dominion upon *Stupidity* and Persecution. Vile and Woful is that Cause, which must be supported by Ignorance and Misery! And yet there are those in *Great-Britain*, who, tho' they wear a holy and venerable Livery, yet have the Boldness and Blasphemy to christen that impious Cause, the Cause of God and of his Church.


To conclude; *Scripture* and *Reason*, without which *Scripture* can have no Effect, are the only Tests of every Falshood and Imposture, and every Superstition. Suppose, for Example, a Reverend Doctor is touched with an odd Zeal for *Bowing* to the *East*; he ought to convince my *Reason* that *Bowing* to the *East* is enjoined in *Scripture*, before he enjoins me to bow also. If he says, it is enjoined by the Authority of the Church; he then must satisfy my Reason, that the *Scripture* teaches the Church to teach her Members to make Bows. If he answers, that neither does the *Scripture* teach to bow to the *East*, but that the *Church* thinks *Bowing* decent and edifying; he must then prove, by rational Evidence, that what every Church thinks decent is a Duty. If he replies, that this is only true of the one Orthodox Church; then he must prove that his Church is the sole Orthodox Church, according to the Rules of the Gospel. And if the Doctor cannot do this to my Satisfaction, then there will be an End of his Argument for his Ecclesiastical *Bowings*.

As we must judge from *Scripture* what is Orthodoxy; so we must judge from Reason, what is *Scripture*.

N U M B E R X X X V I .

Wednesday, September 21. 1720.

Of the Peace of the Church.

 T is a shameful Insult upon our Understandings, that of sanctifying the most wicked Purposes and most cruel Actions with the most honest and innocent Names; and yet nothing is more frequently practised. Thus the worthy Name of RULER shall be prostituted and pronounced aloud, to palliate and even to justify the Barbarities of a TYRANT; and that peaceable Word *Obedience* shall be forced to signify an unmanly and unnatural Patience of *Servitude*. LAWS, which were intended to protect and encourage good Men, and to restrain and punish ill ones, are often perverted into deadly Instruments in the Hands of Robbers and Usurpers, against the Virtuous and the Harmless; and the Means of Preservation are turn'd into Engines of De-

278 *The Independent Whig.*

struction. The *Lord's Anointed*, which at first was only a Man approved and chosen by God himself to be the Ruler of his People, has been since compelled to mean an over-grown Plunderer, who *chose himself* to be a Destroyer of God's People.

These are some Instances of the Abuse of Words in *Civil Life*. In Religion, the Abuse has been, if possible, still greater; of which I have given already many Proofs, and shall continue to give more in the Course of these Papers. I shall at present confine my self to a Phrase, which is indeed a very good one, but which I have never known applied to a good Purpose in my Time, nor at any Time before; I mean, that of *the Peace of the Church*.

By the *Peace of the Church*, when it is taken in a rational and warrantable Sense, I take to be meant no more than this; namely, That any Number of People, who have agreed among themselves upon Terms of religious Communion, shall quietly enjoy the sacred Privilege of Meeting together to worship God; and whoever disturbs them, let his Title or Pretensions be what they will, is a Breaker of the Peace of the Church. Or if any other Society greater than the former, and of longer standing, think fit to be provok'd at this religious Indulgence, and call it a Breach of the Peace of the Church, they bring home the Charge upon themselves; who, by breaking the Peace of the Church, mean only the not submitting to their own
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proud Spirit, which finds Peace only in the Exercise of successful Tyranny. Or if the smaller Society should usurp Dominion over the Thoughts of its own Members, and demand of them a Belief contrary to the Light of their Minds, or a Behaviour contrary to the Dictates and Conviction of their Consciences; they justify the Claims of the greater Society over themselves, and leave themselves without Excuse for having left it.

A Man, who leaves the Communion of any particular Church, does no more break the Peace of that Church, than a Man who leaves the Realm, breaks the Peace of the Realm; or than a Man breaks the Peace of a Family, who, whilst the rest dine upon Flesh, does himself dine separately upon Fish. But he does evidently break the Peace of the Church, who would by Violence keep any one in that Church; forasmuch as, by so doing, he violates Conscience, which is the Seat and Centre of Religion, there being no Religion where there is no Conscience, and consequently no real Church. He who prays without Book, does not break the Peace of the Church; provided he forces no Body to pray as he prays: But he who would compel others to pray by his Pattern, against their own Liking, does not only break the Peace of the Church, but destroys, as far as he can, its very Essence; because a Church is constituted by the *voluntary* Devotion performed by Two or Three met together in

280 *The Independent Whig.*

Christ's Name. If it is not *voluntary*, it is no Devotion; God will be worshipped *in Spirit and in Truth*: And if it is voluntary, no Man can controul it.

Hitherto, for the most part, *the Peace of the Church* has been unnaturally made to signify a blind Submission to the Dictates of Priests in Matters of Devotion; and a blind Acceptance of all their Schemes, Dreams and Forgeries in Matters of Faith. Now here is no Church at all; but on one hand, the Invention and Imposition of deceitful and tyrannical Men, defacing and misrepresenting Religion, and wresting it to serve their own wicked Purposes; and, on the other hand, a Tribe of Fools and Slaves, sacrificing their Senses, their Freedom, and their Consciences to Antichrist, and worshipping him, and not God. If one of these groveling Bigots resumes his Eyes and breaks his Fetters, he, forsooth, is a *Schismatick*, he breaks the *Peace of the Church*.

Why will these Men, so famed for being close and crafty, be so plainly shewing us, that by the Church they mean only Themselves; and by the Worship of God, they mean only the Worship of their own Persons and Authority? But they make this manifest, as by a Thousand Instances, so particularly by this; namely, that the greatest Rebel to God shall find good Quarter, provided he be but a good Subject to them; and the most conscientious Servant of the Living God shall

shall find no Mercy, if he disputes to bend to their Usurpations, and to swallow their Inventions for divine Oracles. It is no matter whether you live like a *Christian* or no, provided you do not break *the Peace of the Church*; but if you do, your being a Saint will not atone for it, nor stand you in the least stead.

If I do all I can to please God, I shall certainly please him. Now, if the Clergy had the same View and Design, my pleasing God would also please them. In consequence of this, if I thought my Abode and Communion with them a Sin, it is their Duty to encourage and exhort me to leave them, and to obey God rather than Men. But far from this, the Plea of pleasing God is often no Way of pleasing them; and they seldom fail to damn a Man for those very Actions, by which, through Christ, he shall be sav'd; namely, deserting Authority for Conscience, and finding out the Truth for himself.

A stupid Servitude to unbounded Dominion, supports the Peace of the Church in some Countries, just as Ignorance, Poverty, and many Dragoons do the Peace of the State in others.

The breaking of the Peace of the Church, as the same is generally understood by the ignorant People, and always by the ambitious Clergy, is both a rational and a religious Duty, and the best Action a Man can perform. That Man must be as void of Reason

son as of Religion, who quarrels with me for having different Faculties from him, and a different Way of conceiving Things. He might with as much Propriety quarrel with me for having a different Complexion, and a different Palate, neither of which is in my own Power.

If I christen my Child without the *Sign of the Cross*, or a *human Form of Words*; how do I, by this, break the *Peace of the Church* or of good Neighbourhood? But he, who oppresses or calumniates me for thus doing my Duty, by discharging my Conscience, commits an Outrage both upon Humanity and Conscience; and not only breaks the Peace of the Church and of Society, but by his Want of Charity declares his Want of Christianity.

If I follow the best Light I can get, I do my Duty; and if I do my Duty, I please God. And who shall dare to tell me, that though I please God, yet I break the Peace of the Church? Would not this be to own, that the Will of God and the Will of the Church are opposite Things?

I do not believe, that there are upon Earth two Men who think exactly alike upon every Subject; and yet our different Tastes in Meat, Drink, Building and Dress, make not the least Difference in human Society; nor is it likely they ever will, unless we establish by Law, and tack Preferments to One particular Mode of Eating, Drinking, Building and Dressing; then indeed we may soon expect

expect to see the establish'd and orthodox Mason, Cook and Taylor, very zealous and loud for *Conformity* and *Penalties*. But at present, Ten Men in Ten different Suits, can dine together upon Ten different Dishes, and give Ten different Opinions upon one Piece of Painting or Architecture, without breaking Friendship or good Humour. If indeed they are drunk either with Wine or Zeal, they will be apt to fight about the *Church* or *something else*: But why Men in their Senses should clamour and quarrel at their Neighbour's particular Conscience, any more than at his particular Palate, no Reason can be assigned, but the Infatuations of Priestcraft operating upon its Brat Bigotry. Is not Conscience dearer to a Man than his Palate or his Fancy in Cloaths? God can receive no Worship that comes not from the Conscience; and he who commands you to follow him against your Conscience, commands you in effect to provoke God out of Complaisance to Man; and rather than do this, I hope it is lawful to break the Peace of the Church. Where the Church quadrates with a Man's Conscience, he will of Course comply with the Church; but where it does not, he is in Conscience bound to desert it; otherwise to be a Conformist, he must be a Hypocrite.

Can these Men be Christians, who demand Submission to their Dictates, in Opposition to the Dictates of Conscience, and at the Peril of Salvation; and who, provided you obey

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284 *The Independent Whig.*

them, care not though you mock God? But if they will allow *every Man to be fully persuaded in his own Mind*, which is the Apostle's Rule and Precept, then the Cry of breaking the *Peace of the Church*, is an empty knavish Cry.

Indifferent Things in Religion there are none; and therefore the pretended Power of the Ecclesiasticks to impose them, is wicked and ridiculous. If they are indifferent in their own Eyes, why are they imposed? And if they were indifferent in the Eyes of others, no Body would refuse them. But, if I dislike them, they are no longer indifferent to me; and if you lay any Stress upon them, they are no longer indifferent to you. But to oppress, imprison and ruin People for Things *allowed to be indifferent*, is such a Piece of Impudence, and wanton Cruelty, as cannot be described.

To call any Thing indifferent in Religion, is to own that it has nothing to do with Religion. Now, can any Reason be given why Religion should be interested in that, in which Religion has no Interest. Sure these Men mock us, and would seem to be in Jest, did not their Proceedings, when they have Power, shew them to be terribly in Earnest.

If I neglect a Ceremony or a Cringe, which I think a Reproach to Religion and Reason; do I break *the Peace of the Church*, for thus doing Honour to Religion and Reason?


son? Or is it not rather an Insult upon Both, and a manifest Breach of Charity, to use me ill for acting upon such righteous and laudable Motives? Do I break *the Peace of the Church*, in worshipping God after a Manner that I am verily persuaded he will accept? Or do I not rather dishonour him, in using that as Worship which my Mind tells me is no Worship, tho' it should be Established by Law?

In *Popish* and *Mahometan* Countries, you see neither true Religion nor the Practice of it; and yet *the Peace of the Church* there is wonderfully well secured by great Armies and Capital Penalties. Fire and Sword, Halts and Dungeons, are all employed to protect *the Peace of the Church*. And in every Nation under the Sun, where the *Church* enjoys the most *profound Peace*, the People enjoy the most profound Misery, Ignorance and Slavery. Civil and Religious Liberty are certain Signs of each other, and live and die together; but, I believe I may lay it down for a Maxim, that *in any Country where there is ne'er a Separatist from the Church, there is ne'er a Freeman in the State*. To which Maxim I may venture to add another, namely, that *in the Ecclesiastical Style, the PEACE OF THE CHURCH is but another Phrase for the POWER OF THE PRIESTS*.

NUMBER XXXVII.

Wednesday, September 28. 1720.

The Enmity of the High Clergy to the
B I B L E.

 E can never sufficiently admire and adore the infinite Goodness of God to Mankind, in giving him a perfect Rule or Law for his Direction and Conduct; and delivering it in Books and Scriptures, which are plain and easy in all Things necessary to be known to every one, who shall make a proper Use of his natural Faculties, and not weakly trust a Pope, or some Body like a Pope, for their Interpretation, who will ever have ambitious or other wordly Purposes to serve, by imposing false and wicked Meanings on those sacred Writings.

How ought we then to value our Bibles, daily to read them, and search our selves for
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those Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge; and how jealous should we be of trusting our Temporal and Eternal Happiness to the Judgment and Conduct of others, who, for the most Part, from imbibed Prejudices or worse Designs, represent the most ridiculous, chimerical, absurd, contradictory and immoral Opinions, to be fundamental Articles of Christianity!

Notwithstanding, such is the Power and crafty Malice of the Popish and popishly affected Clergy; that in most Countries they have either taken the Bible (even on the Presence of Religion it self) out of the Peoples Hands, or have made it useless there; and such is the senseless Stupidity of the gaping Herd, that they observe not the Injury done them, and not only suffer this worst sort of Robbery, Violence, and Injustice, but kiss the Rod, and esteem themselves to be kindly and religiously dealt with.

In all Popish Countries, before the Reformation, the Bible was lock'd up in the learned Languages; which effectually hindered the People from being acquainted with that Holy Book; the Priest saying, and the poor ignorant Laity believing, *That it was Heretical, and the very Foundation of all Heresy and Schism, for the People to read the Bible.* Indeed, after the Reformation, some Translations were made of it into the vulgar Languages of particular Popish Countries; but were the People ever the better for it? No
such

288 *The Independent Whig.*

such Matter, I can assure you ; for no one was suffered to read those Translations without a special Licence, which was dangerous to ask for, and rendred a Man suspected of heretical Pravity ; and the Priest never granted it but to those, who either would not or could not make any use of it ; that is, to such as he well knew were pre-engaged by strong Prejudices, or stronger Interests, to favour the sacerdotal Power, and who durst not understand the Word of God differently from the Clergy, who called themselves the Church.

But in other Popish Countries, and particularly in *Spain*, the Bible is not extant in the vulgar Tongue, and consequently must be unknown altogether to the People, who are incapable of reading it even by Licence ; which can scarcely be called a Privilege lost, considering how few durst ask, or can get Licences, who they are that can obtain them, and what Danger they would incur in making a right Use of them.

Especial Care is taken to prevent the Importation of any Translation of the Bible in these Countries ; and no sooner does any Ship of a Protestant Nation come to Anchor in any Popish Port, where the Inquisition prevails, but she is visited and search'd narrowly for heretical Books, and particularly for Bibles, by the Officers of that Court, which are immediately carried to the Inquisition, and there burn'd.

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The brave old Marshal *Schomberg*, when he was last at *Lisbon*, told a Friend of mine, with Tears in his Eyes, That having, when he came ashore there, left a *Dutch Bible* (which had been his Grandfather's) upon the Table of his Cabin, it had been carried from the Custom-House to the Inquisition ; and that though he had sent to the chief Inquisitor, and had spoke to him himself for it, he had not been able to recover it.

Let us now approach nearer home, and see how Protestants are used in respect to reading the Bible. And in order to consider this Matter, I shall premise Two Things. *First*, That the End and Design of reading the Bible, is to find out the Will of God, or the Meaning God holds forth to us therein, that we may regulate our Belief, and form our Practice thereby. And, *Secondly*, I premise, That to such reading the Bible, it is requisite that we should not be prejudiced by Education, in behalf of any Fancies ; that we should pay no Regard to the Authority of weak and fallible Men ; that no Opinions should be imposed on us as Christian Opinions ; as for Example, Consubstantiation, Predestination, the peculiar Opinions of *Arius* or *Socinus*, and other Doctrines, pretended to be derived from the Word of God ; and that no Man should be hurt in his Body, Name or Goods, for understanding the Bible in that Sense which he thinks to have been intended by God, but that we should act,

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and be permitted to act, in this Matter, as we do in understanding another Book : For if such Arts, and Crafts, and Force are used, to make Men understand the Bible in a *Lutheran, Presbyterian, or Socinian* Sense, as form Mens Minds so strongly to those Senses, that not a Man in the Countries, where any of those Opinions prevail, does, or dares differ from the Sentiments of the Publick, or hurts himself any way by so doing ; that Man is not properly allowed to read the Bible, or to take his Religion from thence, but receives his Religion from his *Lutheran, or Presbyterian, or Socinian* Priest, and might as well take his Religion from a Popish Priest, without using any Bible at all. For what is the difference between taking a Popish Priest's Word for the Sense of the *Bible*, about the Infallibility and Authority of the Pope and the Church, or the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, (which Bible the Priest keeps solely in his own Hands,) and taking a Presbyter's Word, or being influenced by him, as to the Sense of the Bible, in respect to the Doctrines of the Divine Right of Presbyters and Predestination? (which Bible he does, for Form's Sake, put into the Laymens Hand, but keeps the Sense in his own.) If there is any material Difference, it is in this, that the Popish Priest acts a fair, open and consistent Part, in denying the Use of the Bible; and that the Presbyter does the same thing hypocritically ; and that the Presbyterian Lay-

Layman makes a more shameful and contradictory Submission to his Presbyter, than a Popish Layman does to his Priest.

When the Minds of the Youth, and their Passions, are thus engaged in behalf of certain human Compositions; when they are taught to reverence Men, who are hired and paid to maintain those Compositions; are bred up to hate the Persons of Men of other Perswasions, to abhor their Doctrines, and think it matter of just Disgrace to change the Principles of their Education: And when all this is taught as the Dictates of the Holy Scriptures; must they not, under these Prejudices, read the Scriptures, without understanding them? Is not that Impartiality, which is necessary towards finding out the true Sense of a Book, intirely taken away? And is not a Partiality, which must lead Men to mistake the Sense of a Book, introduced?

But even this is nothing to what those must go through, if they dare to understand the Bible differently from what is vulgarly understood in the Country where they live: They will be deemed *Hereticks*; which is *supposed to include every thing that is bad in it*: It makes every thing appear odious and deformed; dissolves all Friendships, and extinguishes all former kind Sentiments, however just and well deserv'd. And from the time that a Man is deemed an *Heretick*, 'tis Charity to act against all Rules of Charity. And the more Men

292 *The Independent Whig.*

violate the Laws of God in dealing with him, 'tis in their Opinion, doing God greater Service. And besides being thus put into a *Bear-Skin*, and made a *Scare-Crow* ; what is called *Heresy*, undoes Men in their Trades and Callings, subjects them to Ecclesiastical and Civil Prosecutions, and deprives them of all Preferments in the Church or State. Whereas a Person who understands the Bible, as he is led by the Nose to understand it, which is for the most part falsely, has not only fair Quarter and Reputation, and all manner of Preferments in Church and State attending him ; but may be as lewd as he pleases, provided he has a sufficient Portion of Zeal for his Orthodoxy, or rather for the Orthodox Priest.

Is it not therefore a mere mock Show, to recommend to Men the reading of the Scriptures ; if, when they read them, they must understand them just as their Master, the Priest, tells them, under the Penalties of all the foregoing Inconveniences, and the foregoing Rewards, which the Priest, by his Power and Influence, bestows ? Bishop *Bramhall* tells us plainly, (and too many of our modern Divines agree with him) that *the promiscuous Licence which Protestants give to all sorts to read and interpret the Scripture, is more prejudicial, nay, pernicious, than the over-rigorous Restraint of the Romanists* : Which is Protestant Priestcraft with a witness ! For, as Mr. *Chillingworth* most judiciously

ciously observes, *He that would usurp an absolute Lordship and Tyranny over any People, need not put himself to the Trouble and Difficulty of abrogating and disannulling the Laws made to maintain the common Liberty, or of locking them up in an unknown Tongue from the People ; for he may compass his own Design as well, if he can get the Power and Authority to interpret them as he pleases ; if he can rule his People by his Laws, and his Laws by his Lawyers. Nay, the more expedite, and therefore the more likely way to be successful, is to gain the Opinion and Esteem of the publick and authoriz'd Interpreter of them : For by this means he presses the Laws into his Service, to advance his Designs ; and can, in Accommodation to the Opinion Men have of the Excellency of the Laws contained in the Scriptures, with a sort of Grace, put a Crown on their Head, and a Reed in their Hands, and bow before them, and cry, Hail King of the Jews ; and pretend a great deal of Esteem, Respect, and Reverence to them, while he is in a more effectual manner misleading the People about their Meaning, than if he destroy'd the Scriptures themselves, or lock'd them up in an unknown Tongue from the People.*



NUMBER XXXVIII.

*Wednesday, October 5. 1720.**Of Penance and Religious Revellings.*

Have, in Two former Papers, considered the Nature, Use, and Consequences of *Religious Fastings*: I shall, in this, enquire a little into the Merits of *Penance*, and the Devotion of *Festivals*; a Couple of potent Engines in the Hands of Churchmen.

Joy and Sorrow proceeding, as they do, from certain Causes which necessarily produce them; the one troubles the Imagination, and the other delights it, whether we will or no. They are different Names given to different Operations of the Animal Spirits, which bring to God Almighty no voluntary Worship, and consequently no Worship at all. The same Disorder in the Blood or Nerves, which discovers it self in Sighs and Groans, would,

in a greater Degree, bring forth Rage and Convulsions, which are not the Symptoms of a Gospel-Spirit, but rather the Marks of Spirits dispossest'd in the Gospel. People under Trouble, or in the Spleen, are too apt to mistake their bodily or mental Disorders for the Workings of Divine Grace; as if the wise and mild Spirit of God delighted to play childish and mischievous Pranks with weak and unhappy Men, by filling them with wild Freaks or cruel Agonies. I doubt there are few of these Sort of People, who can give a Reason why the great God should be better pleas'd with a sorrowful Heart, than an a-king Head.

If God Almighty is pleas'd with our afflicting our selves, he must be pleas'd best when we afflict our selves most; and a greater Degree of Suffering must beget a greater Portion of his Favour: And consequently, the cutting our selves with Knives, as did the *Priests* of B A A L, must be more acceptable to him, than the bare whipping our selves with Rods, as do the *Priests* of R O M E, &c. By the same Rule, if the endangering of one's Life be well pleasing to him, the destroying of one's Life must be more pleasing to him; and Despair and Self-Murder are more grateful Instances of Duty and Devotion to the God of Mercy, than barely being afraid of him, and barely making our Lives miserable. The pious Consequence of all which must be, that the blessed and beneficent God, who

296 *The Independent Whig.*

is the Giver of all Good, is the Author of all Evil and all Misery ; and the Maker and Preserver of Mankind, who is the Father of Mercies, is also the Destroyer of Mankind, and the Father of Cruelties.

Nor is this Reasoning so strange, or these Conclusions so unnatural, as some may ignorantly imagine ; since the Priests, who, for the godly Ends of Dominion and Gain, were the first Inventors of *Sacrifices* and *Penances*, have frequently proceeded so far in their inhuman and diabolical Craft, as to butcher Men to appease their Deity. And indeed, when once you had taken their Word for the divine Will, you renounced all Right and Pretence to judge for your self, or to dispute any Measure of Devotion which they had thought fit to prescribe. Thus, for Example, if the Priests told you, that their God graciously long'd for a Bonfire, and had, in his divine Goodness, appointed you to be the principal Faggot ; as averse as your carnal Spirit might be to this great Honour, yet you could not decline it, without the terrible Imputation of Disobedience, or Apostacy, and probably of Atheism : For, having given the Priest the Property of your Body, your Thoughts and your Behaviour, you were become ALL the Priest's.

The Duty of *Penance* is, according to certain Churchmen, a very necessary Duty : But there is another Duty quite opposite to it, and yet very necessary also ; and that is,
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The Independent Whig. 297

the Business and Duty of *Festivals*. These two may indeed seem Contradictions to each other, and to the Eye of un sanctify'd Reason are so; but where they are enjoined by *Church-Authority*, it is our Duty to think them orthodox and consistent, and so to be merry or melancholly, and to weep or laugh, just as *Mother-Church* COMMANDS us, in defiance of our Constitutions and our Understandings. We are to mourn on *Good Friday*, because on that Day our *Saviour* died; though, if he had not, we could not have been saved: And we are to take our Belly full of Meat and Mirth on *Easter Sunday*, because Christ rose on that Day from the Dead; though it was impossible for him to have continued there.

PENANCE is a ghostly Punishment imposed by a Priest, or voluntarily suffered by a Penitent, for some Offence real or imagined. Sometimes it consists in Abstinence from certain Meats, which, it seems, are not so much in Favour with Almighty God, as are others: A Piece of Cod, for Example, with rich Sauce, is less savoury in God's Sight, than a plain Piece of Beef and Cabbage, and a greater Atonement for Sin. Sometimes it is performed by Change of Apparel; and a dirty Hair-Cloth is more pious and meritorious, than a clean Holland Shirt. Sometimes it is perform'd by rambling to some Church, to stare at a *wooden Saint*, and kiss an old Coffin. Sometimes this holy Severity rests

298 *The Independent Whig.*

rests altogether upon your Pocket, and God's Wrath is fervently and successfully bribed away by the prevailing Intercession of some potent *Pieces* to his Priest, who will infallibly persuade him to overlook your Guilt, and be good Friends with you. Sometimes you are to scarify your Back-side for the Healing of your Soul, and reconcile your self to Heaven by the Dint of Lashing; which will sometimes serve for *another Purpose*; and so a Scourge made of Broom, is made the Scourge of God. But, if drawing Blood on this Occasion be so pious, because so painful, I do not see why the Drawing of a Tooth would not do as well; or why the Omnipotent would not be as propitious to desolate Gums, as to blister'd Loins?

So much for praising God by being Sorrowful; in which Case, Sickneſs and Pain are great Blessings. Now for the Method of pleasing him, by being Joyful; in which Case, Festivity and Merriment are great Blessings too! So that, we see, the Almighty is highly pleas'd with both our Misery and our Happiness.

Worldly Blessings are, no doubt, the Gifts of God, and we ought to receive them with joyful Hands and grateful Hearts; and Religion, and Philosophy too, teaches us to submit to Afflictions and Calamities with Patience and Humility, and to consider them either as Effects of our own Intemperance and Folly, as the necessary and inevitable Con-

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comitants of human Nature, or the Strokes of Providence intended for our Correction and Amendment; nor do I deny but it may be sometimes lawful and expedient too, mechanically to prepare our Minds with Dispositions suitable to the Actions they are to produce.

Every one's Experience shews him, that his Mind and Body operate upon one another: Both are improved by Exercise and moderate Food, raised and exhilarated by Musick or Diversion, enervated with Sickneſs, oppreſs'd with Drunkenneſs and Gluttony, fatigued with Labour, and often all the noble Faculties of the former are quite deſtroyed and extinguished by Diſtemper and Accidents.

It may be therefore not only lawful, but our Duty, by proper Food, agreeable Con-
verſation, and due Exercise, to prepare and keep our ſelves in ſuch a Temperament, as may beſt qualify us for cool Reflection, and enable us in the beſt Manner to exert our Faculties; but from what Principle of Rea-
ſon or Religion do we find, that we muſt work up our Paſſions beyond their natural Pitch, and endeavour to deſtroy the Serenity and Calm of our Minds, to do Homage to the Deity; who will accept no Service but what flows from a ſincere and upright Heart, elevated and raised by a due Contemplation of the divine Perfections, and the Benefits received from our great Creator, or humbled by the Conſideration of human Infirmities; and
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300 *The Independent Whig.*

not intoxicated with various Musick, pompous Shews, delicious Banquets, or Bottles of Brandy ; nor depressed or sunk with Mortifications, Penances, Fasting, or unwholesome Diet ; all which have nothing to do with true Religion, though they have been always essential Parts of every false one.

Let us now see what sort of Devotion these *Holy Days* produce.

Idleness is the Nurse of Vice, and fills the Taverns and the Stews with many debauch'd Customers, who, had they any Thing else to do, or would do any Thing else, might live as chaste and sober as any of their Neighbours, that are so, because they are well employ'd. The common People think of a *Holy Day* with no other View, than that they shall then have their Belly-full of Ale, and Rambling, and Idleness. Perhaps, in the Morning, they hear a Sermon, which is often calculated to drive Peace and Religion out of their Souls, and to fill them with Bitterness and Rage against those who provoke them, by being sober Subjects, and conscientious Christians. Next comes a gluttonous Meal, and a Load of Liquor, which adds fresh Fuel to the orthodox Zeal they imbib'd in the Morning, and inspires them to deface or demolish Places sacred to God's Worship, and to affront and insult every sober Man, who has not been at the Brandy-shop, and will not pronounce *Hell* and *Damnation* according to the Word of Command. After all this Mischief and Bravery, they

they have Recourse to more Liquor, over which they swear and triumph upon their late *Orthodox Exploits*. Probably, at last they vomit up their Devotions in *Drury-lane*, and finish the *Holy Day* in a *Bawdy-House*. Next Morning, the Sum of the Reckoning will be this ; They have lost a Day, and with it their Innocence : They have risked their Health and their Souls : They have provoked God ; and in his Name, committed Outrages upon their Neighbours. Sweet Jesus ! Is this the Spirit of *thy Church* ? Can these be *thy Followers*, or the Followers of *thy Servants* ?

Upon the Whole ; a Man may ply his Imagination with black and dismal Ideas, till he has made his Heart as sad and sorrowful as he pleases : He may also, by playing with his Fancy, and by amusing it with agreeable and humorous Images, render his Soul as merry as he pleases ; and by these Means create either *Comedy* or *Tragedy* within himself : But neither is Wantonness of Spirit any Worship of God ; nor is this Gloominess of Soul any Devotion to him. The *Mahometan Dervises* and *Indian Brahmans* exceed us by far in Fasting and Austerities : It is incredible what voluntary Torture and Plague they undergo in the Way of Religion. And as to godly Ranting and Roaring, the old *Pagan Bacchanals* were as mad and as drunk on *their Holy Days*, as we of the Establish'd Church can be on *ours*.

NUMBER XXXIX.

*Wednesday, October 12. 1720.**Priests afraid of Ridicule.*

RELIGION, as the Popish Priests have disfigured it, is only a wicked and ambitious Scheme, contrived by them, to set themselves above the People. This is so true, that wherever the Priests have the most Power, Religion has the least. Being neither appointed by the Law of Nature, nor the Law of Christ, they are only Intruders into the Affairs of Religion; which is therefore under an Usurpation, while it is under them. So that their Foundation being false, they are in most Countries reduced to support it by false Facts, and deceitful Appearances. And as they are thus oblig'd to cover Fraud with Fraud, and support one Violence by another, it is no Wonder that we find it often so carefully hidden under Inventions, and deformed
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by Absurdities; and all those Inventions and Absurdities defended by Cruelty and a strong Hand.

This strange Jumble of Fictions they have the Front to call by the Holy Name of *Religion*, and gravely to create Faith out of Lies: And with the groveling Multitude, whose Eyes are in the Earth, all this passes off well enough; They have fearful Hearts and simple Heads, and so stand always prepar'd to be frighten'd or deluded at the priestly Word of Command. But because the Craft lies subject to daily Detection from rational and discerning Men, its Champions have rais'd loud Cries and strong Prejudices against the Two principal Weapons, by which their Cause is most annoy'd; I mean the Weapons of REASON and RIDICULE; the former of which discovers Truth, and the latter exposes Fraud.

What civil Treatment these Reverend *Seers* afford to *Reason*, I have shewn else-where; and shall handle in this Paper, the Business of *Ridicule*, which they always represent as impious and profane, whenever it meddles with the Cassock; and yet always exercise it according to their Talents, without Mercy, when the waggish grave Creatures are pleased to be Arch upon *Dissenters* or *Free-Thinkers*.

To them is no doubt owing, that frequent but false Saying, now in the Mouth of every *Ignorant*; namely, that *it is an easy Matter*

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ter to make a Jest upon Religion or the Priesthood; which, whether they are aware of it or not, is saying that their Religion and its Priests are a Jest. For he, upon whom the Jest is made, does, in Effect, make the Jest; otherwise it is none. Religion and Virtue cannot be ridicul'd; and whoever attempts it, by shewing himself a Villain, raises Horror instead of Laughter, which is the End of Ridicule. But the vending of Grimace for Religion, and setting up for Piety without Virtue, are the natural Subjects of Jeer and Merriment.

Whoever fears Ridicule, deserves Ridicule. He is conscious of a weak Side, and knows he cannot stand a Laugh. This is the Case of sacred Grimace, or *Gravity*, which Men of Sense see to be only a studied Restraint laid upon the Muscles of the Face, and the Joints of the Body, and teaching them to move, not by the Impulses of Nature, and the Motions of the Heart, but by Design, either to attract Admiration, or obtain Credit, or gain Followers. And therefore sacred Grimace dreads Men of Sense. However, it is never to be set aside; for this same affected Demureness, ridiculous as it is in it self, is a solemn Bait to catch the Mob, whose Respect always follows their Wonder. The Vulgar are caught, like Woodcocks, by the Eyes, and led, like Calves, by the Ears; Shew and Sound lead their fat Heads Captive. It is therefore no
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Wonder, that in Popish Countries, a shewy Chancel, a curious tall Steeple, gilded Organs, and a delicate Ring of Bells, keep the *Many* on the Parson's side, and make them all good Churchmen; and always get the better of a plain Religion, that has its Abode only in the Heart, and wants all the above-mention'd Marks of the true Church. Besides all this, there are more Mirth and Holy Days in their Orthodox Faith, than in the contrary Scheme, which obliges Men to earn Heaven with the Sweat of their Brows, and take Pains to be saved.

These, however, are but small Instances of *Ridicule*, taken from the Force and Grimace of an external Religion. I shall here give Instances much more considerable, as well as much more ridiculous. Do we not see the pretended Successors of the Apostles, at home and elsewhere, instead of making *Tents*, or converting the World, living voluptuously, and promoting the Excise? Do we not frequently see the Ambassadors of God, sent to promote Virtue and Peace, and the Observance of his Laws, promoting Strife, frequenting debauch'd Houses, rooking after Wealth, and plaguing and reviling their Neighbours? Do we not see holy Men, who have the Call of the Spirit, rioting in all the Works of the Flesh? Do they not buy Livings with Money, and then claim them by divine Right? Do they not chop and jockey away poor Parishes for such as are richer,

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and yet pretend to have upon their Hands the Cure of Souls ; tho', by such vile Bargaining, they shew that they value as little those Souls they have just bought, as they do those they have lately sold? Do not many of them, tho' they are void of all Merit, yet demand great Respect ; and tho' ignorant, pretend to teach, and to reveal God's Will, which is already reveal'd, and yet live as tho' there was no God? And do they not, without obeying God, set up to command Men? Do they not seek Honour from their Cloth, which yet they dishonour? And do they not, for the blackest Crimes, claim Sanctuary from the Church, which Church is the People, which People they abuse and deceive? Do they not pretend to mend others, without being better than others, but in Truth more idle and proud than all others ; two Qualities neither suited to the Welfare of Religion nor of human Society? Do they not flatter and support the worst of Tyrants ; plague and distress, and often destroy the best of Kings ; and in both Cases, do they not bely the Holy Ghost, and pervert his Meaning? Do they not pretend to be appointed for the Good of Mankind, and yet always make Mankind, where-ever they have Power, thoroughly miserably, base, poor, ignorant, and wicked? And finally, do they not invent vile Lies for vile Ends, and then blasphemously make God Almighty to father them?

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Here is such a motly Mixture of opposite Principles and Practices, as will always render those, who are chargeable with them, the Contempt or Abhorrence of all Men who have Eyes and Understanding. Jest and Scorn will subsist as long as their Causes subsist; and Clergymen, of all others, will be most expos'd to them, while they continue to deserve them; because more Modesty, Truth and Consistency may be expected from them than any others. It is but a Piece of Justice due to Religion, to ridicule those, who, as far as they can, ridicule Religion, tho' they set up for its Defenders. Ridicule, when it has no longer Matter to feed on, will die of it self; and the Clergy, to avoid it, have no more to do, but not to deserve it: But to go on complaining, without amending, is to nourish Raillery and Satire, by their own Actions. But as the Reforming themselves is a Practice seldom known among High-Churchmen; Clamour, Lies and Oppression are the constant Remedies they apply to the great Grievances of Wit and Ridicule, as often as they meddle, or seem to meddle, with the Cloth. This will abundantly appear from the following Instance, which will also shew the wonderful Vigilance and Jealousy of Churchmen, in Behalf of the Trade.

Moliere having, in his Plays, brought upon the Stage Characters from the highest Quality and Professions in *France*, without offending either; drew in his *Tartuffe*, an

excellent and strong Picture of a Hypocrite, who, tho' carefully distinguished from a Man *sincerely* religious, yet happen'd to resemble the *Churchmen* so much, that they rais'd a terrible Outcry against the Play; and, according to their laudable Custom, lugg'd Heaven, Head and Shoulders, into their Quarrel. *Tartuffe* was, it seems, their Representative General, and in ridiculing his godly Grimaces and stoical Devotion, *Moliere*, they said, ridiculed them. In fine, by exposing the concealed Villain and Debauchee, the whole Posse of the Priests thought themselves expos'd.

Zealous therefore for the Dignity of the Cassock, and justly apprehending that a Contempt upon Hypocrisy, would bring a Contempt upon the *Order*, they applied to the Court; I say to the *Court*, where, by a religious Subserviency to the Ambition, Lust, and all the Rogueries of the Great, this sort of Creature always finds Friendship and Countenance. That arbitrary and debauched Court could refuse the Priests nothing; and the Play was forbid. Thus the *Tartuffes* of the Church, redeem'd from Scorn the *Tartuffe* of the Stage: The *Picture* was secur'd from being shewn, by the Number, Clamour, and Interest of the *Originals*.

Not content to rail with all due Clerical Bitterness against this Comedy, and curse the ingenious Author by Word of Mouth; they detach'd one from their Body to curse him

him in Print. This Christian Author, without ever having seen the Play, pronounced it diabolical: He affirmed, that *Moliere* had a Devil, that he was a Devil Incarnate, a Devil in Man's Shape, a Libertine, an Atheist, and one who ought to be *burn'd* in this World, as he would assuredly be *damn'd* in the next. For the Vengeance of these Messengers of Peace never stops at the Death of their Victim; nor will they allow their Maker to have more Mercy than themselves.

To shew how justly these holy Persons were alarm'd on this Occasion, I shall here give a Sketch of *Tartuffe's* Character, as drawn in that Play. He is a Fellow, who, from his godly Out-side and great Poverty, is taken by an honest Gentleman, credulous and devout, into his Family, and permitted to govern it. He is a great Glutton, and a great Pretender to Fasting; a great Despiser of Money, but rooks all he can from his deluded Patron. He will not speak to my Lady's Maid till he has covered her Bubbies with his Handkerchief, so afraid is the Saint of Temptation; but at the same Time he tempts my Lady her self to Adultery, and endeavours to debauch his Benefactor's Wife, with Heaven in his Mouth. The Gentleman's Son discovers to his Father these Solicitations of the Hypocrite, which he had overheard; and the Lady owns and confirms them; but neither of them is believed: The poor bewitch'd Man cries, *You are all Enemies to the*

310 *The Independent Whig.*

godly Tartuffe; and tells him that to make him Amends, he will give him his Daughter, and settle his House and Estate upon him. *The Will of the Lord be done*, says the Hypocrite. Accordingly, by an instant Deed, to the apparent Ruin of his Family, he makes this godly Villain Heir of all he has, with a Right of present Possession. The Lady, not knowing what was done, does, by putting her Husband under a Table, make him a Witness of the Holy Lecher's Designs and Importunity. He is by this convinced; but when ashamed of himself, and enrag'd at the Ingrate, he bids him get out of his House; *No, Sir*, says Tartuffe, *It is your Turn to get out; the House is mine, and you shall know it; I will be reveng'd of you, on Behalf of Heaven, which you would wound thro' my Sides.* Behold an Orthodox Pattern of the usual Claim of *Divine Right* to the Wages of Villainy and Delusion!

All this Behaviour, and these Speeches, were such manifest Marks of the Church, that all its genuine Sons dreaded their coming upon the Theatre. Their Rogueries are all Sacred, and must not be set to View.

Moliere, to take away as much as was possible, all reasonable Ground of Clamour from the Ecclesiasticks, had not so much as suggested in the Play that *Tartuffe* was a Priest; and only called his Comedy, *The Impostor*, in general. Besides all this, he had dress'd up his Rogue like a Man of the

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World. He had not given him so much as a flapping Bever, but a smart secular Cock, with a Sword, a good Head of Hair, a Cravat, and a gaudy Coat. But all this Precaution of *Molier's* availed not; *Tartuffe* had the Conduct, Craft, and Spirit of a Priest, tho' disguised like a Layman, and the Clergy found themselves whip'd upon *Tartuffe's* Back.

Eight Days after *Tartuffe* was forbid to be acted, the Court was entertained with a very irreligious Play, call'd *Scaramouch*. After it was over, the King told a certain *Prince*, that he wonder'd why those People, who were so scandaliz'd at *Molier's* Comedy, did not say a Word of this. O Sir, answer'd the Prince, *The Reason is plain; The Play of Scaramouch only makes a Jest of God and Religion, in which these Gentlemen are no wise concern'd: But Molier has dared to bring the Priests upon the Stage; which is not to be suffered.*



NUMBER XL.

Wednesday, October 19. 1720.

Of PRIESTLY CRUELTY.



Good Man, is distinguish'd by his Humanity, as is the good God by his Mercy. Where there is no Humanity, there can be no Grace: We cannot possess at the same Time the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of a Brute or a Dæmon. Charity it self, the most sublime Christian Grace, seems to be only Humanity guided and animated by Piety: And this is the more likely, for that it is the Business of the Christian Religion, to recover to human Nature those Virtues, which were either lost or lessen'd by the Fall of *Adam*. Had Man continu'd as he was made, perfect, a new Covenant and another Institution had been unnecessary.

Humanity then is an amiable Virtue, and the Characteristick of a Man; and of a
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Man civiliz'd, gentle, benevolent; purged from all Rage, and every unfociable Passion.

But the Appetites and Passions of Men being too powerful for Reason, and the Law of Nature; Religion was instituted to regulate and quell them. For this End, it proposes, as Sanctions and Restraints, the Favour of God to the Virtuous, and threatens his Displeasure to the Wicked, in this Life; and, in the next, still more adequate Rewards and Punishments, even those of Heaven and Hell. This is the great Design of Religion; and it effectually answers the same, where its own honest and simple Dictates are observed and followed; than which Dictates nothing can be more plain and reasonable; the principal Precept of the Gospel, next after our Belief in *Jesus Christ*, being that of Peace and Love: *A new Commandment*, says our Blessed Saviour, *I give unto you, that you love one another.*

In Consequence of this Doctrine, and of the heavenly Temper which it inspir'd, the first Christians lived together in perfect Concord, Love and Charity; and yet there is no Question to be made, but they differ'd from each other in their Conceptions about some Points in Religion; as we see the Apostles themselves also differ'd on several Occasions, and express'd some Warmth in these their Differences.

This same Spirit of Charity and Love continu'd amongst the first Christians, till lying, crafty, and selfish Men, calling themselves Ministers, and assuming to be Teachers, fill'd them with the Spirit of Discord, and instructed them to hate one another. They rent them into Parties, inspir'd them with the Bitterness of Faction, and taught them its Watch-words, by which they were to distinguish themselves from all other Christians: *I am of Paul, I of Apollos, and I of Cephas*, and the like Cant, full of Zeal, but void of Sense and Religion, had a direct and mischievous Tendency to abolish Faith in Christ, and to place it upon Men; and, in fine, to turn Christianity into Caballing. They likewise marked out all who would not be driven nor deceived by them, with malicious and opprobrious Names, proper to expose them to Hatred and ill Usage. *Heretick, Apostate, Unbeliever, Schismatick*, and the like hard and equivocal Words, were found strangely effectual towards stirring up Rage, Revenge, and relentless War, against those unhappy People who were mis-call'd by them; so effectual! that the same Sett of Men have never suffer'd the same Sett of Words to wax obsolete, but to this Day use them, and cause them to be used, to the same impious and anti-christian Purpose, and (where the Law does not restrain their bloody Hands, and guard the Innocent) with the same Success.

When these ungodly and merciless *Ecclesiasticks* had thus, under the Cloak of Religion, craftily rais'd the blind Resentment and impious Zeal of their deluded Followers, against their Christian Brethren, who preferred the Spirit of the Gospel, and the honest Convictions of their Consciences, to the Pride and Commands of Men; there follow'd such amazing Instances of Cruelty, and such terrible Scenes of Blood, as must affect the Hearts and the Eyes of all who read them, or hear of them, if they possess either Christian Grace or natural Compassion. Christians were, by their Priests, set on to butcher Christians; and to make Havock of each other, in the Name of that Religion, which was distinguish'd from all other Religions, by a Spirit of Meekness, Mercy, and Love: And all this perhaps, for their different Manner of explaining a Mystery, which could not be explain'd; or which, if explain'd, ceas'd to be One.

This restless and unrelenting Rage, which Christians practis'd, at the Instigation of their Clergy, upon one another, for Thoughts and Opinions which they could not help, was a strong and a lasting Stumbling-block in the Way of the *Unconverted*; who could have but small Appetite for a Religion, which disown'd all Kindred to Peace and Humanity, and inspir'd its Votaries with such cruel Hatred, and such dreadful Fury: For, in short, that was the Religion they were to embrace;

embrace; a Religion no longer to be found in the Gospel of *Christ*, but in the ridiculous Systems and selfish Inventions of *Priests*. And it was no Wonder the *Heathens* were backward and afraid to embrace a Religion, in which the involuntary Mistake of a priestly Distinction, without a Meaning, might cost them their Lives, and ruin their Families.

So terrible and deform'd had merciless Christian Priests render'd the merciful and amiable Christian Religion! Their outrageous Zeal was become so powerful, and had such bloody Effects, that the *Pagan* Persecutions were real Advantages to Christianity, as they gave it a breathing Time from the more fatal Persecutions and even Adulations of its own Priests; who, while the Civil Sword was over their Heads, being obliged to obscond or fly, could not throw about their Balls of Contention and War; and, therefore, against their Will, left Religion to flourish, as it always did, under those *Pagan* Persecutions, which their own turbulent and seditious Behaviour had often brought upon it. This is indeed their highest Praise, that the Church reap'd Good from their Wickedness.

The *Pagan Persecutions* no sooner ceased, but the War of the *Christian Priests* recommenced; and the Persecutions rais'd by them were ever more merciless and more dreadful, than those which were rais'd by the *Heathen Princes*; forasmuch as they added, as
far

far as they could, the Destruction of the Soul to that of the Body: So compleat was their Vengeance! And, besides, it had no End: The Severity of the *Heathens* had long and frequent Intermiſſions; but the Cruelty of the *Priests* was insatiable.

The Persecutions practis'd by the *Pagans* had, moreover, this Mitigation, that they were occasion'd for the most Part by the Words and external Behaviour of Christians, who contemn'd their Gods, neglected their Temples, and ridicul'd their Manner of Worship: In all which, tho' they had Reason and Truth on their Side; yet they provok'd by so doing these ignorant Bigots, whose false Religion laid no Restraint upon their Passions, but on the contrary greatly inflam'd them. But the priestly War was waged against the Mind it self; the free and independent Mind! They would be controuling the *voluntary, necessary and invincible* Motions and Operations of the Soul; and be putting Bonds upon the Imagination, which is as ungovernable as the Wind or the Sea. You must say after them, nay you must *think* after them, and believe by their Direction; and either be Slaves or Hypocrites. A terrible and inflexible Tyranny! It was to no Purpose to alledge, that you could not perform Impossibilities, nor see with other Mens Eyes: You must be punish'd for what you could not help; you must be deliver'd to Satan, in Spite of your Innocence; and

318 *The Independent Whig.*

rewarded with Hell for your Sincerity, and Well-meaning: And the same honest Qualities which entitled you to the certain Favour of God, provok'd the certain Vengeance of his pretended Ambassadors; to whose Empire, Vertue and Truth are ever the most formidable Foes. To compleat this ghostly Barbarity, not appeas'd by Death and Damnation; your good Name must be murder'd with your Body, and your Memory loaded with monstrous Calumnies, and bitter Defamations; which merciless Treatment could be expected only from that accursed Spirit, who has been a *Liar and a Murtherer from the Beginning*; or from those who are acted by him. To pity you, was unpardonable; and to speak well of you, was to involve all those who did it, in your Doom. Thus holy Wrath is, of all others, the soonest kindled, the fiercest while it burns, and the slowest in going out, if ever it goes out.

It would be endless to give Instances of the bloody Spirit of such sort of Churchmen. They are the only Body of Men upon Earth, who possess least of human Compassion. They have been even ingenious in Cruelty, and shew'd vast Invention in their rigid, various, implacable and exquisite Manner of executing it. *Ita feri, ut se mori sentiat*, seems to have been the Doctrine and Delight of the Church, as well as of *Caligula*. Neither He, nor *Phalaris*, nor *Perillus*, nor *Nero*, nor any other Pagan Monster, who made himself Sport

with

The Independent Whig. 319

with human Agonies and Misery, has exceeded them in the Variety and Inhumanity of his projected Tortures, nor equall'd them in the Length.

It is a melancholly Observation, that the *Mahometans*, who by Principle use the Sword, as their great and most prevailing Apostle for the Propagation of their Religion, do yet frankly tolerate Christianity, and every Sect of it, all over their Dominions; and that, on the contrary, *Christians*, who by the Doctrine of the Gospel are allow'd the Use of no Means but those of Gentleness and Perswasion, to promote the Faith of *Jesus Christ*, do yet exercise Fierceness and Barbarity upon all who differ from them, where-ever the Mercy of the Government does not restrain the Cruelty of the Clergy. Thus far the *Turks* act, as if they were conducted by Grace, and obey'd the Precepts of our Blessed Saviour; and thus far the *Christians* act, as if they had adopted the Spirit and Fierceness of *Mahomet*, and renounced the Gospel for the *Alcoran*.

However, that I may not seem partial to the *Mahometans*, I shall add this mournful Reflection, namely, *That too many of the Christian Clergy do justly share with these Infidels, the infamous Praise of having almost dispeopled the Earth. The Infidels have slain their Thousands, and They their Ten Thousands.* They have been the great Promoters of Cruelty and the Sword; they have

have been the constant Patrons of Arbitrary Power, that mighty Engine for rendering Mankind few and miserable; they have been the continual Authors of Wars, Famine and Massacres; and, in fine, they have been the great Instruments of driving Virtue, Truth, Peace, Mercy, Plenty and People, out of the World. *Kill all*, said the Abbot *Arnold*, a Monk militant, to the Army, which being employ'd by the Church to slaughter the poor pious *Albigenses*, had taken the City of *Bezeir*, and being Laymen, were inclining to have some Mercy; *Kill all*, cried this bloody Priest, *God knows his own, and will reward them hereafter*. Accordingly Two Hundred Thousand of these conscientious Christians, and Catholicks mix'd with them, were instantly butcher'd for the Church.


To conclude; our modern Claimers of Church-Authority, do but contend for the same Power and Advantages, which enabled and prompted these their Brethren to execute such numerous and melancholly Mischiefs; and whether they ought to possess that Power, and these Advantages, or no, I take to be the great Point in Debate between the *Bishop of Bangor* and his Adversaries.



NUMBER XLI.

Wednesday, October 26. 1720.

Of High-Church ATHEISM.

HAT Religion, or the Worship of a Deity, is natural to Man, is confess'd by Mr. *Hobbes* himself in his *Leviathan*, wherein he endeavours to assign the natural Causes thereof: And no History or Voyages give us an Account of any Country, in any Manner civilized, without Religion, as well as Priests or Ministers, and Temples or Places of Worship. Men have been in all Ages so prone to Religion, that rather than not have one, they have been contented to worship the most abject Beings in Nature; and indeed, nothing seems to have been too absurd and ridiculous for them to believe and practise, under the Direction of any Men, who had Confidence enough to take upon them to be spiritual Guides of the People. It was ever sufficient,

322 *The Independent Whig.*

to pretend to teach Religion, to make any Thing to be received as Religion.

*The Egyptians worship'd Dogs, and for
That Faith made internecine War.*

*Others adored a Rat, and some
For that Church suffer'd Martyrdom.*

*The Indians fought for the Truth
Of th' Elephant's and Monkey's Tooth.*

*But no Beast ever was so slight,
For Man as for his God to fight.*

*They have more Wit, Alas! and know
Themselves and us better than so.*

HUDIBRAS.

Nor is this Disposition at all abated in the World. The Pagan Part is much the same. And many Christians are more prone, if possible, to Absurdity and Folly, than the Pagans. The Popish, Greek, and several other Christian Sects worship a *Breaden God*; And, besides other numerous Absurdities and Follies, exceed them in that grand One of all, *of delivering up their Persons, Estates, and Consciences, to the Priest; and of hating, damning, persecuting, and burning one another, and all who have any difference in Opinion with them, as he inspires them*: Wherein they outgo both the ancient and modern Pagans, who have generally given Toleration to Men of different Religions from themselves, and have in no Place gone those Lengths in Persecution which some Christians

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(or rather some Persons pretending to be Christians) have done.

As a farther Proof that Religion is natural to Man, I observe, that no History informs us that ever *Atheism* (by which I understand, a direct Denial of the Existence of a Deity, a Providence, and Worship) was able to introduce it self among the People of any Country whatsoever.

Religion is not only natural to Man, but esteemed necessary to Government by Princes and States, who, whether they themselves have believed any Religion or no, have established Forms of Religion, and been willing that their Subjects should obey them, and defend their Country, upon a Principle of Religion, as knowing its powerful Operation on the Minds of Men.

And besides, Religion has a great Support from Priests or Divines, who are very numerous every where, and have a Zeal for every Form they profess, equal to the Interest they derive from it: And if the Interest of one Form runs low, many of them can change their Party, and become zealous for another Religion; as they did three times, in the Compass of five Years in *England*, in the Reigns of *Edward* the Sixth, *Mary* and *Elizabeth*; the non-complying Clergy never amounting to two hundred under any of those Changes.

Great Complaints indeed have been and are daily made in relation to the mighty

Growth of *Atheism*. But those Complaints seem to me for the most Part, if not altogether, goundless, and to be generally Calumnies of High-Church Priests, and High-Church Men, upon the best Christians, *viz.* Such who profess themselves ready to submit to the Authority of Jesus Christ, but refuse Submission to any Priests, whether they be the *Greek, Muscovite, Roman, Dutch, Scotch, or English.*

There is not, therefore, and cannot be, any Danger of the Overthrow of *Religion*, as long as Men continue Men; Religion will necessarily prevail amongst us, and every where else, in virtue of Mens general Disposition to Religion, either under one or several Forms, according as the Civil Magistrates of the World are more or less persuaded, that they themselves are to dictate (or to dictate after a Priest) Religion to their Subjects.

The noisy Outcry therefore of the Danger of Religion from *Atheism* or *Irreligion*, is a meer Chimera of the High Priests; which, in all likelihood, they start to put Men on a false Scent, and to disguise and carry on their own Designs of Power and Wealth: For while People are alarm'd with the Fears of *Atheism*, they are disposed to fall into all the pretended Measures of the Priest to suppress it, and to become zealous for him, who never fails to make Use of the Panick or Madness of the People (which is his Opportunity) to establish Doctrines and Practices

ices for his own Advantage ; which at his Suggestion they falsly suppose to be most opposite to *Atheism*, and to be the best Means to suppress it.

But the constant Danger, and the great and only Concern we ought to have, is, lest, under the Colour and Name of *Religion*, or the Worship of God, we have not only Falshood and Superstition put upon us, but the most detestable and wicked Practices introduced ; such as tend to the Destruction of all Peace, both Publick and Private ; all Virtue, Learning, and whatever is praise-worthy among Men. This is Practical Atheism : This is the Atheism to be dreaded and feared : This is the Atheism whereof we are in Danger : This is the worst Consequence we have to fear from speculative Atheism ; for no Man can say worse of speculative *Atheism*, than that it leads necessarily to all Immorality : And in fine, this *Atheism* the Priest has, in most Places of the World, introduced as Religion, to the utter Overthrow of true Religion ; (which consists chiefly, if not solely, in such Particulars as are for the Good of Society) for by making Men wicked out of Conscience, and upon a Principle of Religion, he as effectually destroys true Religion, as if he introduced speculative *Atheism*. What is it to a Believer in Christ, whether he be persecuted for his Religion by a *Papist*, who does it religiously, and upon a Principle of Conscience ; or by an *Atheist*, who does it

either to protect himself, or to get Credit in the World, or to go Snacks with the Priest, in the Advantages arising from Persecution? Do Men suffer less by a Civil or Foreign War, begun by Zealots, on a Principle of Religion, to promote Religion; than if begun by *Atheists*, for the Sake of Ambition, Glory, Power, Rapine, or Murther? Are the Feuds, Animosities and Passions, stirred up by Priests on Account of Religion, fewer and less disturbing of the Publick Peace, than those of Men left to the Conduct of *Atheistical* Principles? Is it not equal to Husbands to be wronged by *Atheists*, who need no Pardon, as by *Popish* Priests, who can pardon one another; or High Churchmen, who, notwithstanding such Actions, can be countenanced by the Priest, and merit greatly with him, on account of his Zeal for the Church, that is, the Priest? Nay, is not the Danger of Cuckoldom equal from a *Popish* Priest (who, by his Power of confessing and absolving the Woman, has so glorious an Opportunity) as from an *Atheist*? And would our High Priests, if they could get the Nation to be perswaded that they have the same Power of confessing and absolving, (as they have of late been attempting to do in their Books and Sermons) be less Cuckold-makers than *Popish* Priests and *Atheists*?

Could an *Atheist* be a greater Calumniator than Dr. S—e? Could an *Atheist*, who thinks no Deference due to a Bishop, have less Re-
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gard for the Honour of a Christian Bishop than Dr. S—e, who pretends to think Bishops have Divine Authority? Could an *Atheist*, after he had been convicted of Calumny, and forced to confess his Evidence for the Calumny failed him, be more hardened in Villany, than to make no Satisfaction to, and ask no Pardon of the Person injured, but persist in supposing that Time will discover his Charge to be true? Could a Set of *Atheists* have patronised *Calumny* more, than to have called that Doctor to be the Head of their Society; and might they not with equal Regard to Virtue and Religion, have chosen a Highwayman, or a Pick-pocket, who gives his Money for the Augmentation of poor Livings? Has a Modern Bishop more Satisfaction in being thus attacked by a High-Church Priest, supported and abetted by others; or is the Society less disturbed by such Proceedings, than if such Priests were all *Atheists*?

Lastly, Is it not equally destructive of Liberty and Property, for Ecclesiasticks to use religious Cheats and Tricks to get Money from the People, towards raising and maintaining a needless Army of Black Coats, to live lazily in Monasteries, and other Religious Houses; as for *Atheists* to use any civil Tricks to maintain a needless standing Army of Red Coats, or by their Arts to plunder the Publick for any of their other Purposes?

The Design therefore of some following Papers shall be, to shew how the High Church Jacobite Clergy promote true *Atheism* and Irreligion: That the Laity may be put on the true Scent of *Atheism*: That they may have a just dread of the true *Atheism*: That they may cease to be *Atheists*, or Worshipers of the Priest, and cease to receive Religion on his Authority; and that they may return to God and Christ, the sole Authors of all true Religion.

NUMBER XLII.

Wednesday, November 2. 1720.

Of High-Church ATHEISM. *Part 2.*



Proceed, as I promis'd in my last, to shew, by an Induction of Particulars, how the High-Church Priests promote *true Atheism* or Irreligion, by which I mean *Practical Atheism*.

I. And,

I. And, first, I will begin with Perjury, or False Swearing.

I will venture to lay it down as a Truth in Politicks, that Oaths (or something equivalent to them) are, on many Occasions, necessary in Government; and that Peace among Neighbours, Punishment of Rogues, and the Settlement of Property, depend upon them. In the next Place, I will lay down as religious Truths, that an Oath is a solemn Act, both of natural and reveal'd Religion; that Oaths to a Government are to be kept; that there is no greater Irreligion, no greater Affront to God, no greater Insincerity and Injustice to Man, than Perjury; and no Point of Religion, upon which the Honour of God, and the Welfare of Mankind, are more highly concern'd, than in keeping Oaths; that Oaths of Allegiance to a Government intend Loyalty; that Oaths are to be taken in the Sense of the Imposers; that the Heart is to concur with the Lips in repeating them; that Men are to have no mental Reserves in taking Oaths; and that they must not design to break them, nor take them with Design to repent of them.

And yet, on this Head, *Atheists* cannot be guilty of greater Irreligion than some of our High-Churchmen, (under the Conduct of our High-Church Priests) who sometimes are not for restraining our Kings by their Coronation

nation Oaths; and, at other Times, are not for restraining the People, by their Oaths of Allegiance: that is, they are at one Time for breaking Oaths, by contending for unlimited Power, and unlimited Obedience; and at another Time for breaking Oaths, by retrenching the Authority of the Prince, and Allegiance of the Subject. Under this Reign, they are for the latter Perjury: as appears by their open Rebellions; their irreverent Discourses of the Person, and Family, of his Majesty; their Endeavours to alienate from him the Hearts of his Subjects; and inspiring the People with Disaffection to his Government; their inventing and reporting defamatory Stories, to blemish his Character, and weaken his Authority; their rejoycing at any publick Distractions; their taking sides with the *French, Turks, Swedes, Spaniards* and *Muscovites*, whenever any of these Nations are in Measures contrary to the Interest of his Majesty; and lastly, by their ridiculing and cracking Jests upon the State-Oaths, and citing, as a sort of Scripture, these Verses of *Hudibras*;

*He that Imposes an Oath makes it,
Not he that for Convenience takes it.
Then how can any Man be said
To break an Oath he never made?*

And these Things are done by them, not after an Atheistical Manner; not under the
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Appearance of attacking and ridiculing Religion and Virtue, the Joys of Heaven, and the Fears of Hell; but almost as if Slander and Calumny, Treason and Sedition, were Articles of their Church, which they were in Duty oblig'd to perform. They pretend all the while to be religious Men, good Churchmen; concern'd for the Church's Safety; Enemies of false Religion, and particularly of Presbyterianism; and zealous for the Orthodox Faith, contain'd in St. ATHANASIUS's Creed. And tho' the High-Church Priests have not as yet written any Books to defend this Manner of taking and keeping Oaths; yet they take a Method, no less effectual to recommend it: They not only do not bear their Testimony against this open Wickedness, this open practical *Atheism*, (as is their Duty) but are active themselves in the same Practices, and countenance the Guilty, by the Credit and Applause they give them; and the Distinction they shew towards them, recommending them as good Churchmen, and reviling others, principally, for being faithful to the Oaths they have taken to the Government. All which is more effectual to promote Perjury, than direct dogmatizing in Behalf of it; for this sly Way gets them the Applause of many, and prevents the Clamour of others against them; who would be generally detested, notwithstanding the Devotion of the People towards them, if they openly defended Perjury.

Now,

332 *The Independent Whig.*

Now, pray, what is the Difference between these High-Churchmen and *Atheists*? Can *Atheists* be less bound by Oaths? Can *Atheists* be worse Subjects? Are not *Atheists* detestable, because it is suppos'd they cannot be bound by Oaths? And are others less detestable, whom Oaths do not bind? Can any Thing be said worse of *Atheists*, than what Mr. LESLEY says (in his *Answer to King's State of the Protestants in Ireland*) that *the Parliament cannot make an Oath which the Clergy will not take*? Had not King GEORGE Reason to apprehend as much Mischief from his Swearing—Religious—Factious—Rebel—Church-Subjects, as he could have from Swearing—Rebel-*Atheists*? Was the Case of the Dissenters, and other good Subjects, who were plundered before the Rebellion for their Loyalty, or suffered in the Rebellion, better for receiving such Usage from the Hands of High-Churchmen, than from *Atheists*? They are plainly as bad as *Atheists* can ever be supposed to be; worse than *Atheists*, acting by the Principles of Ease and Self-Preservation, which may be suppos'd to be the most general Principles of Action in *Atheists*; and, in fine, worse than any profligate Libertines (I ever met with in *Italy* it self, that Seat of High-Churchship) whom I never heard talk so irreligiously about Oaths, as I have heard some High-Churchmen, or deliver such open Perjury as Parson B—se. What adds to the
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Wickedness and Guilt of these High-Churchmen, is, that they pretend to be Christians, and to take their Religion from the New Testament; that they are of a Church, whose distinguishing Doctrine is Loyalty to the Prince, and which they extend so far as to allow Resistance in no Case to be lawful; and that they have a Sovereign, against whom they have nothing to object, but his Virtues, his mild, equal, impartial and just Administration of Government; for as to his Title (which is the best of Titles, *viz.* the voluntary Establishment of a free People by an Act of their Legislature) these Swearing High-Churchmen can have no just Scruple.

These High-Churchmen therefore are *true Atheists*; They are practical *Atheists*. The speculative Difference between them and *Atheists*, is a Matter of small Moment; for what is it to their Neighbours, while they act like Atheists, that they believe in God and Religion? For while they act like *Atheists*, they do all the Mischief that *Atheists* can do, and all those Things for which alone *Atheism* is so justly detestable. For if Speculative *Atheism* did not lead Men to Immorality, to Faction, to Rebellion, &c. it would be so far from being detestable, that it would be preferable to any Religion that spoil'd Mens Morals, and made them bad Subjects: And I would rather have a Speculative *Atheist* for my Neighbour, and Fellow-Subject, and run the Hazard of his being a vicious Man, than

than an Orthodox-Religious Man, whose Religion made him Vicious.

N U M B E R X L I I I .

Wednesday, November 9. 1720.

Of High-Church ATHEISM. Part 2.



THE next Article of *Atheism*, that I charge upon High-Church Priests and High-Churchmen, shall relate to the very Being of Religion, and that is, *Toleration of Religion*; for unless there be a *Toleration of Religion*, Religion, which is a Matter of Choice and Conscience, is almost excluded the World.

It is asserted by Mr. HOBBS, that the Civil Magistrate of every Country is the Legislator in Matters of Religion; that his Subjects ought to obey him therein; and that, if they do not, they should be compelled by Force to profess that Religion he enjoyns. Which Doctrine implies *Speculative Atheism*, as it destroys *God's Dominion*, by subverting his

his Authority and Laws, and by making a God of the Magistrate; and as it roots out all Religion, by taking away Mens Right to follow their Consciences therein; which constitutes the very Essence of Religion: And it must introduce *Practical Atheism*, if follow'd; by disturbing, distressing, imprisoning, and taking away the Lives of the best Men; by setting Men at Variance with one another, and causing Civil Wars on a religious Account; and by leaving Men to be govern'd only by the Laws of the Civil Magistrate, and taking away all Motives to good Actions drawn from Conscience towards God.

Now the Speculative Principles of High-Church Priests, and those of *Atheists*, differ but little from each other: And the Practices following from both their Principles are the same; that is, the High-Church Priests must be no less *Practical Atheists*, than the *Speculative Atheists* themselves.

I. For, First, as to the *Speculative Principles* of High-Church Priests. Tho' the High-Church Priests contend for a *Law of God*, a *Bible* and a *Conscience*; yet they as effectually subvert those good Things, as the *Atheists*, by asserting, at the same Time, a Right in the Civil Magistrate to compel Men by Laws, or Force, to embrace the true Religion: For what is the Difference between a Right in the Magistrate to compel Men to embrace the true Religion, and a Right in the
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336 *The Independent Whig.*

the Magistrate to compel Men to embrace *his Religion*, which he will always think the best and true Religion.

All the Arguments of High-Church Priests for Church-Authority, and Church-Unity, imply the same *Atheism*. For do they not therein contend for *Submission to Man* in Matters of Religion, and for the Sacrifice of some Mens Consciences to the Judgments of other Men? Which is subverting the *Law of God*, the *Bible*, and *Conscience*, no less, than vesting the Power and Compulsion in the Civil Magistrate.

But their Arguments against all Innovations, in Matters of Religion, are most *Atheistical*. They contend so generally against Innovations, that they cite with Approbation MÆCENAS'S Advice to AUGUSTUS, *viz.* That he *should follow constantly the Establish'd Religion of his Country; for all Innovations would foment Sedition in the State, and be a Means to subvert his Government.* Which Advice (tho' it so manifestly asserts *Atheism* and *Hobbism*, and implies, that neither AUGUSTUS, in whose Reign our Blessed Saviour CHRIST was born, nor any other Pagan Prince, ought to permit Christianity, which is the most pure and peaceable Religion, to become *the Establish'd Religion of their Country*) Dr. Dawson has lately had the Confidence to lay before the present Archbishop of *Canterbury*; whose Conduct and Writings, before he was promoted to

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that See, gave not the Doctor the least Ground to suspect that worthy Prelate would approve such *Atheism*, Irreligion, and *Anti-Christianism*; and no Man dares say they have done so since.

2. Secondly, The Practices following from the Principles of High-Church Priests, are the same with those following from the Principles of *Atheism*. For do not many Christian Civil Magistrates exercise the Right asserted by High-Church Priests to belong to them, and fine, burn, imprison, inflict Corporal Punishments, take away Mens natural Rights, merely because Men follow their Consciences in what they are perswaded is the Law of God? And what more can be done in Virtue of any *Atheistical Principles*? Nor do the Notions of a *Bible*, a *Law of God*, and a *Conscience*, (however inconsistent such Notions are with making penal Laws in Matters of Religion) render High-Churchmen less Persecutors, than if they were acted by any *Atheistical Principles*; as is manifest from what is done in most Countries, where, in Proportion to the Power and Influence of High-Church Priests, Degrees of Violence upon Mens Consciences prevail: Nor do the Precepts of Christ, who requires all Men to *search* the Scriptures, and to believe and live according to the Rules there laid down, and who never sends Men to the Magistrate or the establish'd Priests for the understanding of the *Bible*, abate in the least

338 *The Independent Whig.*

their persecuting Zeal. Nor lastly, does the most perfect Morality taught by CHRIST; who every where inculcates *Love* of Mankind, *Forbearance*, (and Forgiveness even of many Immoralities) and universal *Charity*, and who has said, *By this shall all Men know, that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another*; restrain the High-Church Priest from stirring up in Mens Minds the utmost Hatred, Malice, and Fury of Men against one another; who seem to learn little else from their Priest as Matter of Religion, but the *Doctrine of Malice* against those whom he dislikes. Which *Doctrine* they practise with such Warmth and Zeal, as if it was the principal or only Article of Religion: And therein do more Mischief than Men acted by Atheistical Principles can be suppos'd to do; for *Atheism* is as incapable of making Men uncharitable to one another, on Account of Religion, as it is inconsistent with true Religion to be uncharitable.

How these Atheistical Practices have prevail'd in *England*, even since the Reformation, (for I will not mention the Times before, wherein this *priestly Atheism* was rampant) is apparent from our History, which gives an Account of the burning, hanging, fining, imprisoning, starving in Goals, banishing, corporal Punishments, and harrassing Thousands of good and religious People, on the Score of Religion; upon which I crave Leave to make these Observations.

I. *First,*

I. *First*, That as the High-Church Priests have been always most forward in making and defending Penal Laws; so they have been the most Barbarous and Malicious in putting them in Execution, where they were intrusted with it, as is manifest from the Proceedings in the *Star-Chamber*; where, under the Influence of Archbishop LAUD, and such High-Priests, exorbitant Fines, slitting Noses, cutting off Ears, branding the Face with hot Irons, severe Whipping, the Pillo-ry, and Imprisonment for Life in Dungeons, or Places either unwholsome or remote from Friends, were common Punishments; and sometimes all inflicted upon one Man. Up-
on pronouncing One of these Sentences a-
gainst LEIGHTON, LAUD pull'd off his
Cap, and gave Thanks to God. But the
Lay Part of the Court were merely Priest-
driven and outwitted by LAUD in such
Sentences: For when a Knight mov'd one of
the Lords about the Dreadfulness of the Sen-
tence, intimating, that it open'd a Gap to the
Prelates to inflict such disgraceful Punish-
ments and Tortures upon Men of Quality;
that Lord reply'd, *'twas but in terrorem, and
that he would not have any one think, that the
Sentence should ever be executed.* But that Lord
(either judging of other Men by himself, or
perhaps joining in the Sentence upon a Pro-
mise from LAUD, that it should not be exe-
cuted) found himself mistaken in LAUD,
who, having long divested himself of all

340 *The Independent Whig.*

Lay-Pity, caus'd the Sentence to be rigorously put in Execution.

2. *Secondly*, The Ecclesiastical Commissioners in the High Commission Court put the *Oath, ex Officio*, upon those brought before them on the Score of Religion; an *Oath*, unjust in it self, as it obliged the Parties to answer all Interrogatories, and thereby made all Honest Men, if guilty of any Thing esteem'd a Fault, their own Accusers; and an *Oath*, neither founded on Act of Parliament, nor on Common Law in that Case. After what Manner this usurp'd Power of administering that Oath was exercis'd, you cannot have better express'd, than in the Words of the Lord Treasurer BURLEIGH to Archbishop WHITGIFT. *Your Articles are so curiously pen'd, so full of Branches and Circumstances, that the Inquisitors of Spain use not so many Questions to comprehend and entrap their Preys.*

3. *Thirdly*, I observe, that whenever the Parliament has been dispos'd to introduce the Practice of our Saviour's *Doctrine of Love and Charity*, by repealing any penal and sanguinary Laws, the High-Church Bishops always oppos'd such Repeal. In Proof whereof I will give the Reader but one Instance, referring him to his own Observation for more Proofs in the Case. In 1677, when the Nation and Parliament were under great Apprehensions from Popery and a Popish Successor, and fear'd, lest the *Law for Burning Hereticks*

Hereticks would be soon put in Execution against Protestants, a Repeal of that *Law* was attempted and succeeded: But it was oppos'd by the Bishops, who desir'd that *Law might continue in terrorem to Fanaticks*, tho' God forbid, said they, *it should ever be put in Execution*. This Fact, and many others of the same Kind, will soon be made more known by the (late) Bishop of Sarum's *History of his Times*.

4. *Fourthly*, I observe, that the Persecutions since the Reformation have mostly been for errant Trifles, and Things of the least Importance to the World: We have been chiefly plagu'd and set together by the Ears, about *Caps, Hoods, Surplices, Ceremonies, external Forms*, removing *Tables* from one Part of a Church to another, and *Railing* them in. But the most extraordinary Subject of Persecution and Animosities, and that seems peculiar to our High-Church, was the *Book of Sports*. High-Church having taken a Fancy to make it Religion to have no Sermons on *Sundays* in an Afternoon; but, instead thereof, to make the People *Dance and Play*, in Opposition to Puritans and Dissenters, who, it seems, were so irreligious as to think they were oblig'd to spend their *Sundays* after divine Service was over, in Family or private Devotion: That *Book* was issu'd out by Authority; and many godly Clergymen were harrafs'd for not reading it, as many Laymen were for not turning that *Holy-Day* into a *Play-Day*. But

But to the Glory of King GEORGE, this *priestly Atheism* of Persecution is now vanishing. His Majesty began his Reign with a noble Declaration for *Toleration*, wherein he allows his Subjects to have a Right to a Religion and a Conscience: The Persecution commenc'd by a High-Church Priest against Honest WHISTON fell; and the Promoter is defeated of all Hopes of getting his Charges by a Bishoprick: The Bishop of *Bangor* has preach'd up the Authority of *God* and *Christ* before his Majesty; and his *Majesty* (the Head of our Church, the supreme Ordinary, and the sole Fountain of all Ecclesiastical, as well as Civil Authority) has preach'd it to the Nation: Some penal Laws have been repeal'd; wherein our truly Christian Prelates had, to their immortal Honour, their Share: Liberty of Examination and Debate (which is the most Sacred of all Principles, as it is the sole Foundation of all common Sense, Truth, and true Christianity) grows upon us: A Majority of Dissenting Ministers, assembled in a Synod, have declar'd for the *Bible*; which was never before done by any Synod of Priests, who have always endeavour'd to establish their own or some other Human Authority. The High Priests dare not plainly excite the Mob to burn, plunder, and molest their Neighbours; but are in great Measure reduc'd to Pulpit and private railing and damning. The *sole Persecution* now on Foot, and countenanc'd by Au-

Authority, is, *That High-Church cannot persecute Dissenters*; for it is esteemed by some a *Church-Persecution* not to be able to persecute others: And lastly, I dare write the *Independent Whig*.

O Glorious King *George*! O the Happiness of a Nation to be govern'd by such a Monarch! Of whom I cannot but observe, that he seems to me the Favourite of Heaven, which so blesses all his Designs with Success, that he need not fear Success in any truly virtuous or religious Designs. And (that I may use the printed Words of Mr. BOLD, an excellent Divine of our Church) ' It is no small Encouragement to all, who
' have any Acquaintance with the Christian
' Religion, to rest assured, that God will,
' in due Time, notwithstanding all the Ma-
' chinations and Efforts of ill People, bring
' Matters in this Land to an happy Issue,
' because none are against the Government
' of our most Excellent Sovereign King
' GEORGE and the Protestant Succession,
' but who are also against the Lord JESUS
' CHRIST being sole King in his own
' Kingdom, and consequently against his be-
' ing sole Law-giver to, and Judge of his
' own Subjects, in Matters of Conscience,
' and which relate to their eternal Salva-
' tion.



NUMBER XLIV.

*Wednesday, November 16. 1720.**Of High-Church ATHEISM. Part 4.*

AS a further Proof of the Charge of *Practical Atheism* upon High-Church Priests, I proceed to shew, how they confound and subvert all Morality and Holiness of Life; which is the main Design of all Religion, and more particularly of the Christian.

I. This they do, in the first Place, by teaching the most Immoral and Unholy Doctrines, and thereby leading Men to Actions, in the highest degree, prejudicial to human Society.

To *do as we would be done unto*, and to *love our Neighbour as our selves*, are Moral and Christian Principles, of daily and most general use. We cannot converse a Moment, without acting agreeably or contrary to them.

And

And the Happiness of Society consists, in great Measure, in the Practice of those Duties; as the Misery of Society consists in their Breach. For what is Happiness in Society, but the Prevalency of universal Love, and equal Favour and Justice? And what greater Degree of Love can we shew to others, than that Love wherewith we love our selves? And what can a whole Society wish for more, than that equal Favour and Justice be distributed among them? And what is Misery in Society, but Malice, and Hatred, and Partiality; and their Consequences, Disorder, Confusion and War?

Now the High Priest dogmatizes against these fundamental Maxims of Morality, whenever he contends against the Right of Men to judge for themselves in Religion, which he pretends to use himself; whenever he contends for Penalties, or Discouragements of any Kind, against those who differ in Opinion from him, which he would not at the same time think just to have inflicted on himself for differing in Opinion from them; whenever he damns Men as Hereticks and Schismatics, in Cases wherein he would not damn himself; whenever he judges whole Sects or Bodies of Men Insincere, (as is his constant Method towards Dissenters) and would not at the same time be thought insincere himself; and in fine, whenever he preaches contrary to that Love of all Men, that Forbearance, that Forgiveness of Injuries, that Meekness,
that

that Peace and Quiet, that Beneficence to all in Distress, and that Charity (the greatest of Moral and Christian Virtues) which *beareth all Things, believeth all Things, hopeth all Things, endureth all Things*, which is the Charity taught in the Gospel: All which he cannot but be willing to see prevail in the World, with respect to himself. How often the High Priest preaches after this Manner; or rather how seldom he preaches otherwise; and how successful he is in introducing the *Practical Atheism* suited to such Doctrines, *viz.* Factions, Quarrels, Violence, Injustice, Plundering, Partiality, Devastation, and Murder; every Observer may be satisfy'd by his own Experience.

Rebellion is the actual Dissolution of Order in a Society; and is ever founded either on the Jealousies and ill-grounded Animosities of the People in Relation to their Sovereign, or to one another; or on suppos'd Defect of Title in the Sovereign. Now these our High-Church Priests promote, and inculcate by their constant Lectures of Church-Peril; of the sad State of the present Times, beyond all that ever were before them; of their own want of Power; of Passive Obedience and Hereditary Right; and several other favourite factious Subjects: And this way lead the People to Rebellion; and that in Breach of Oaths, which are the most Sacred Band of Society.

And as the High Jacobite Priest thus teaches the very worst Vices, so nothing recommends

recommends a Layman to him so much as the Practice of them,

2. *Secondly*, The High-Church Priest subverts Morality and Holiness of Life, by laying an undue Stress on Matters of little or no Importance; and thereby engages the Thoughts and Affections of Men about them, to the neglect of Morality and that Holiness of Life, which is the End and Design of all Religion. For whoever places Religion in Trifles, will (like the *Jews* who were much concern'd to pay Tythe to the Priest of Mint, Annise and Cummin) *neglect the weightier Matters of the Law.*

What Work have we in *England*; what Hatred, Damning, and Uncharitableness is there among us, about mere Ceremonies, and external Forms? And what Arguing and Zeal is there for imposing them; when a general Agreement in them (as it would be manag'd) would be so far from being of any real Use in Religion, and tending to Peace, that it would be a Conspiracy against the Rights of Mankind, and against that Peace and Charity, which would otherwise prevail? For have not Men a Right to follow their Judgments in Matters of Religion, and especially in such Matters as are allow'd to be indifferent in themselves; and is not that Right invaded by imposing them? And would not not Peace and Charity (which, we see, exist not under Imposition) prevail, by allowing Men to practise as differently
as

348 *The Independent Whig.*

as their Judgments direct them; as we see they do prevail in Countries of Liberty and Toleration, in Proportion to the Degree of Liberty and Toleration allow'd?

What Work is there at this Time, how many Volumes are there daily publish'd, and how deeply concern'd is all *England*, about certain Speculations, whereof the People can understand nothing, and about which the Priest confounds himself? Can the People understand any of the various Schemes and Hypotheses invented by Divines, in relation to the Trinity in Unity, and the Incarnation of God? Does Dr. *Waterland*, who is a very learned, acute, and ingenious Person, and has writ two great Books on this Subject, know what he contends for himself, when he expresses the Sum of his Doctrine of the *Trinity in Unity*, in these Words, *that each Divine Person is an individual intelligent Agent: But, as subsisting in one undivided Substance, they are all together, in that respect, but one undivided intelligent Agent?* That is, One Individual is Three Individuals, One undivided Agent is Three undivided Agents, and One Person is Three Persons? And can any Mortal suppose the People to be in the least concern'd about such sophistical Chimeras, crabbed Notions, bombastick Phrases, and Solecisms? And must not Zeal about Ceremonies, and unintelligible Speculations, as much supplant and take the Place of Morality,

ality, as ever *Rites* did among the *Jews*, or the religious Trumpery of the Pagans did among them? Even Zeal for Truth in certain Points, is not of such Importance as is commonly suppos'd. I have been much pleas'd with the Judiciousness and Charity of the following Passage in a Sermon of the Present Archbishop of *Dublin*, the most worthy and truly profound *Dr. King*. *Let us suppose one, who takes all the Descriptions we have of God in Scripture literally; who imagines him to be a mighty King that sits in Heaven, and has the Earth for his Footstool; that at the same time has all Things in his View which can happen; that has Thousands and Thousands of Ministers to attend him, all ready to obey and execute his Commands; that has great Love and Favour for such as diligently obey his Orders, and is in a Rage and Fury against the Disobedient: Could any one doubt but he, who in the Simplicity of his Heart should believe these Things as literally represented, would be sav'd by Virtue of that Belief; or that he would not have Motives strong enough to oblige him to love, honour, and worship God? The Imperfections of such Representations will never be imputed to us as a Fault, provided we do not wilfully dishonour him by unworthy Notions, and our Conceptions of him be such as may sufficiently oblige us to perform the Duties he requires at our Hands.* The like may be said of a Man who has mistaken Notions of the Trinity in Unity, and of the
Person

350 *The Independent Whig.*

Person of Christ; provided he does not wilfully dishonour God and Christ by his Notions, and *conceives* Christ to be a Legislator, and a Ruler sent from God; than which *Conception*, nothing can more oblige us to perform the Duties, that both God and Christ require of us.

3. *Thirdly*, There is no Crime, but what has, at Times, and on certain Occasions, the Support and Encouragement of the Popish Priest; as there is no Virtue which he does not at Times, and on certain Occasions, discourage. Let a Man be Whoremaster, or Drunkard, or Lyar, or Slanderer, or Passionate, or Revengeful, or Cheat; and he may meet with fair Quarter from the High Priest, be seldom or never reprov'd by him, have his Esteem and Countenance, and the Character of a good Churchman from him, and be sure of Priestly Absolution at last; provided he heartily espouses the Interest of the Priest, that is, contends for his Power and Wealth. On the other side, let a Man have ever so many virtuous Qualities, and let him also be a sincere Believer in Jesus Christ; but without the Quality of espousing the High Popish Priest's Interest; and he will never stand so fair in the Priest's Eyes as the aforesaid Profligate—Good—Churchman. This Conduct of the Priests has a mighty Influence on the Actions of Men, and tends to make them as bad as their Inclinations, and Temper, dispose them

them to be; inasmuch as the general Esteem and good Name of most Men will depend on the Characters given of them by the Priests, who are the general Gossips, and are revered every where for their inward Sanctity, and external long Gowns, and broad-brim'd Hats, the latter sufficiently manifesting the former. I will not deny, but that the Priests had much rather their Followers were virtuous than otherwise; they well knowing, that Credit is to be got by having such Men among them, and that the best Harvest is to be made of the Weakness and Superstition of virtuous Men. But the Bulk of Men being vicious, and the virtuous Man of Sense being in the Interest of Religion, and against Priestcraft; the aforesaid High Priests are reduc'd to the Necessity of countenancing the Vicious, to carry on their own Interest with a sufficient Party.

4. *Fourthly*, High-Church Priests, by the Weakness of all Popish States, except the Common-wealths of *Venice* and *Norcia*, and of most of the Protestant States, are let into too great a Share of the Civil Governments of *Europe*; and thus by becoming *Acting Politicians*, confound all National, Publick, and Political Morality. For, as the late Bishop of *Sarum* observed, *the Priests have a Secret to make the Natives of a Country miserable, in Spite of any Abundance, with which Nature has furnish'd them.*

*

They

352 *The Independent Whig.*

They have not Souls big enough, and tender enough for Government: They have both a Narrowness of Spirit, and a Sourness of Mind, that does not agree with the Principles of Human Society. Nor have they those Compassions for the Miserable, with which wise Governors ought to temper all their Counsels; for a stern Sourness of Temper, and an unrelenting Hardness of Heart, seem to belong to that Sort of Men.




N U M B E R

NUMBER XLV.

Wednesday, November 23. 1720.

Of High-Church ATHEISM. *Part 5.*

 Speculative Atheists exist but in few Places, and have never been numerous any where; even tho' all those be accounted such, upon whom Atheism has ever been charged. But where they do exist, they seem to me to owe their Rise principally to Superstition and Priestcraft; and the higher the Church and Priest have been, the more numerous have been the Atheists: Nay, there seems to me more just Cause to suspect the High-Church Priests of Atheism, than any other Men.

I. Whoever reasons himself into Atheism, undoubtedly reasons very wrong, and either proceeds on false Principles, or makes wrong Conclusions from true ones. But among the

several false Arguments, by which the Atheists and loose People impose on themselves, and endeavour to seduce others; there is none more frequently urg'd, than that the current Absurdities and Superstitions taught by Priests, and the Priests Hypocrisy and Villanies, are sufficient Reasons to make all Religion be deem'd a Cheat, and *Priests of all Religions to be deem'd the same.* The Poet says, in the Person of a Libertine,

—— — *We know their holy Jugglings,
Things that would startle Faith, and make us*
(*deem,*
Not This, or That, but all Religions false.

This indeed is pitiful Reasoning, and ought to be extended no farther than to those Doctrines and Priests, against whom the Objections lie. But so it is Men reason; and Experience will prove, that 'tis the High-Church Priest, and his Proceedings, which make the Atheist. But before I proceed to that Experience, I will say this in behalf of this Argument for *Atheism*, that the Evil apparent in the World (which some urge as an Argument against the Existence of a Deity) seems to me most visible in the Actions of Priests, who do, in my Opinion, create the greatest Disorder among Men.

The late Bishop of Sarum tells us, in his Travels, That *a Man of Quality at Rome,*
* *and*

and an eminent Churchman, said to him, that it was a horrible Scandal to the whole Christian World, and made one doubt of the Truth of the Christian Religion, to see more Oppression and Cruelty in their Territories, than was to be found even in Turkey. He says, some Physicians in Naples are brought under the Scandal of Atheism: And it is certain, that in Italy Men of searching Understandings, who have no other Idea of the Christian Religion, but that which they see receiv'd among them, are very naturally tempted to disbelieve it quite; for they believing it all alike in gross, without distinction, and finding such notorious Cheats as appear in many Parts of their Religion, are, upon that, induced to disbelieve the Whole. And it is an Observation of Dr. GEDDES, that there are more People of no Religion in Italy, than in all the World besides, (Tracts, Vol. 3.) England is also said by our High Church Priests, to abound with Atheists, no less than Italy. But if there be such People among us, they are entirely owing to the Conduct of some of our Priests, who, I will be so bold as to affirm, are as impudent in their Pretences to Power and Authority, as the Italian Priests dare to be. This, tho' at first sight it may seem Matter of Admiration, that they should be so in such an inlightned Country as England, where so many understand right Reasoning and true Christianity; yet is natural enough, if it be consider'd, that it is the last

struggle of Priests for *Popery* and *Slavery*: They contend for the most ridiculous Things, as necessary to Salvation; and by their Prevarications about Oaths, and Shiftings about Doctrines, according to their Interest, dispose Men to make the same Inference, as the *Men of Quality*, and *Men of searching Understandings* do in *Italy*. And some among us may, perhaps, make that Atheistical Inference, considering how the Nation had been managed in the High-Church Reign of King CHARLES the Second, when *the Design*, according to the late Bishop of Sarum, seem'd to be to make us first *Atheists*, that we might more easily be *Papists*.

Dr. HICKES tells us, that the Practices of the swearing Clergy, since the *Revolution*, who had preached Passive Obedience before, have tempted loose and unprincipled Men to turn *Atheists*; and that those Clergy have set open the *Flood-Gates* to that *Deluge of Atheism and Impiety*, that now overflows the Nation. And he cites another Author with Approbation, for saying, *This Change has made many sober Men sceptical, and gone farther towards eradicating all the Notions of a Deity, than all the Labours of Mr. HOBBS*. I have been ready to suspect, that Religion it self was a Cheat; and others, of my own Knowledge, have the same Temptations to question Religion it self.

The Independent Whig. 357

Mr. Lesley says, *The Carriage of the Clergy in the Revolution, has given greater Occasion to the ENEMIES OF THE LORD TO BLASPHEME, and turn'd more Men from the Church of England, to the Church of Rome, and EVEN TO ATHEISM; has overturn'd, ruin'd, divided, and dishonoured our Church more, than if that Persecution, which some feared or pretended, had fallen upon them.* He says, *The Clergy banter and mock God to his Face; and that Atheism is a smaller Sin than this, since it is better to have no God at all, than to set up One, to laugh at him; and that the greatest Danger to which we are now exposed, by the Defect of so many of our Clergy, is a Contempt of all Religion, which is now spread over the Land, in a manner unheard of in former Ages.*

Lastly, The late Bishop of Sarum tells us, that *since his Conversation with Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, he had had many Occasions to discourse with People tainted with wicked Principles; and, says he, I do affirm, that the greatest Prejudice those Persons have at Religion, at the Clergy, and at the Publick Worship of God, is this, That they say they see Clergymen take Oaths, and use all Prayers, both ordinary and extraordinary, for the Government, and yet in their Actings and Discourses, and of late in their Sermons, they shew visibly that they look another Way; from whence they conclude, that they*

358 *The Independent Whig.*

are a mercenary sort of People, without Conscience.

2. Atheism being, in my Opinion, a most unnatural Thing, and a Crime, which, for its Madness as well as Guilt, ought to shut a Man out of Civil Society, I am not disposed to lay it to any Man's Charge, tho' a vicious Person; much less to any sober Man's, without his open Profession of it, or an evident Proof of it upon him. But if consistently with Charity, we may suspect any Men of Atheism, who deny themselves to be Atheists, we may certainly suspect such Priests, who live viciously; who play with Oaths; who, tho' swearing to the Government, are *Jacobites* in their Hearts (as Dr. *Hickes* says, I hope falsely, *the main Body of the Clergy, God be thanked*, are;) who are uncharitable in their Censures, and Persecutors; who defend plain Absurdities; who dispute against the Reasonableness of Reason; who contend for human Authority, that is, their own, in Matters of Religion; and argue for the Belief of unintelligible Propositions or Mysteries: (For Men of common Sense and common Honesty, can hardly be suppos'd to join real Belief and such Things together:) And above all, such Priests, who are constantly charging others with Atheism (and those oftentimes the most Learned, Best, and most Religious Men, as *Cudworth*, *Tillotson*, and *Locke*;) upon whom we may justly return the Charge of Atheism, in the Words of a modern

modern Philosopher ; *How*, says he to a high Presbyterian Priest, *could you think me an Atheist, unless it were, because finding your Doubts of the Deity more frequent than other Mens are, you are thereby the apter to fall upon that kind of Reproach ? Wherein you are like Women of poor and evil Education, when they scold ; amongst whom the readiest disgraceful Word is Whore. Why not Thief, or any other ill Name, but because when they remember themselves, they think that Reproach the likeliest to be true ?*

And as many Priests give such Cause of suspicion, so I would fain know what Mr. LESLIE must esteem the Priests of our Church to be, when he says, *That the Parliament cannot make an Oath which the Clergy will not take ?* And whether many of our Clergy must not be esteemed *Atheists*, according to the Saying of the late Bishop of Worcester, *It was a great Providence of God, that so many of the Clergy refused the Oaths to the Government, lest People should think there was no such Thing as Religion, and incline to Atheism ?* And lastly, what can be thought of the Reverend Author of the *Tale of a Tub*, a known High Priest ; or of the Majority of a Lower House of Convocation, who, in their *Representation of the present State of Religion*, with regard to the late *excessive Growth of Infidelity, Heresy, and Profaneness*, fell upon the truly religious (tho' erroneous) Books of Mr. *Whiston* and others,

360 *The Independent Whig.*

but passed over the *Tale of a Tub*, a Book of a reverend Brother; tho' that Book was the sole open Attack that had been made upon Christianity since the *Revolution*, except the *Oracles of Reason*; and was not inferior in Banter and Malice to the Attacks of CELSUS, or JULIAN, or PORPHYRY, or LUCIAN? And what can we think of the Majority of another Convocation, which a worthy Member spoke to in these Words, *With what Face or Conscience, Mr. Prolocutor, can we offer to complain of the Licentiousness taken by Lay Writers, and yet connive at the like Offences given by the Ministers of our Church; I doubt greater Offences? For if all the ill Books against Religion, Scripture, &c. were here packed up together, I would undertake to pick out the worst of them, by pointing at those written by Clergymen, even of the most prophane Drollery, as well as the most serious Heresy?* So that upon the whole, the High-Church Priests seem to me to drive a mighty Benefit from Atheism. They have it chiefly among themselves, and protect one another in it; and thereby have the Profit of Atheism, arising from taking false Oaths, and from doing many Things without Scruple of Conscience; as also the Pleasure, as some of them esteem it (See Dr. ATTERBURY'S Sermon on BENNET'S Funeral) arising from the Practice of Vice. And at the same time they themselves stand clear of the Imputation of Atheism, and brand those they do

do not like, with it, who are oftentimes the best Men and best Christians.

P. S. The Author of this Paper having received two very modest and religious, though anonymous Letters, which take Offence at an Expression in the *Independent Whig*, N^o. XXXVIII. about godly Sorrow; returns for Answer, That *Sorrow for our Sins* is not there opposed, but *Mechanic Sorrow*, and such as proceeds from wrong Causes; and the Author only supposes that such enthusiastick People, as he has before mentioned, knew not the true Principles of Repentance, which he himself has described.

In fine, as to *godly Sorrow*, *Sorrow for Sin*; I know it to be so much a religious Duty, that I know there can be no Religion without it.



 NUMBER XLVI.

Wednesday, November 30. 1720.

No PRIESTS instituted by the Christian Religion.



Will, in this Paper, shew, that there are no Priests or Sacrificers in the Gospel Dispensation, in any other Sense, than as every Christian may be called so, as he offers up to God the Sacrifices of Praises and Thanksgivings, and a pure and contrite Heart; and, in this Respect St. *Peter* calls all Christians, *a spiritual House, an Holy Priesthood, to offer up spiritual Sacrifices, a chosen Generation, a Royal Priesthood, an Holy Nation, a Peculiar People, God's Heritage*, or, more properly, *God's Clergy*.

It is undoubtedly true, that all Power, Superiority, or Distinction amongst Men, must be derived either from the positive Institutions of God, or the Consent and Agreement

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ment of one another; and therefore, whoever demands any Authority over others, their Goods or Possessions, must support his Pretences by such Proof as the Nature and Importance of the Claim requires; and it must be very glaring and undeniable, when it is levelled at the temporal and eternal Happiness of all Mankind.

It is a severe Circumstance, which attends those, who oppose receiv'd Opinions, that they must not only contend against popular Prejudices, and long imbibed Notions, against the Interests and Passions of great Numbers of artful and combining Men, but in most Countries against the Weight and Force of Publick Authority. The labouring Oar too will always lie upon you: You must disprove what has no Proof to support it, and bring Clouds of Arguments to maintain Propositions that are really self-evident; a bare Possibility that you may be mistaken, shall be deemed a full Conviction; and sometimes the clearest Demonstration on your Side, shall be called only carnal and human Knowledge, not to be used about Spiritual Things; and even when the irrefragable Strength of your Reasoning forces Consent, you will have no Thanks for your Pains, but will be esteemed officious and factious, and be said *quieta movere*, if by Chance you should escape the Censure of promoting the Cause of Deism or Atheism,

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364 *The Independent Whig.*

However, these Claims in the Popish and Popishly affected Clergy are so enormous, the Consequences of them so fatal to Christianity, and the Arguments pretended to be brought from Reason and Authority for their Support, so weak and contemptible; the whole Design and Current of the Gospel being directly against them; that I shall do my utmost totally to demolish and throw down the tottering Building, and shew it has no Foundation in common Sense or Scripture.

No Proposition can be more evident, than that before any positive Institution, every Man must have been his own Priest, and alone must have offered up his own Prayers and Thanksgivings; but when God Almighty instituted the *Jewish* Dispensation, which consisted of numerous Rites, Ceremonies, and Sacrifices, he also appointed Persons to officiate and execute these Duties for the People as well as for themselves, who were called Priests or Sacrificers, with particular Salaries or Dues annex'd to their Office, and they were to be only chosen out of one Tribe.

Accordingly in the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, chap. v. v. 1. and chap. viii. v. 3. a High Priest is defined as *one taken up from amongst Men, and ordained for Men in Things pertaining to God, that he may offer Gifts and Sacrifices for Sins*: So that the Business of the Priesthood was for expiating Sin, and reconciling Men to God, by offering Gifts and Sacrifices: And the Apostle adds, *verse the 4th,*

That

The Independent Whig. 365

That no Man could take this Honour to himself, but he which was called of God, as was Aaron, whose Commission was couched in the plainest and most express Words imaginable, and the Peoples Duty and Obedience were prescrib'd even to the minutest Circumstance.

As the Jewish Rites and Ceremonies were almost endless, and consisted of so many minute Particulars, that it was next to impossible not to commit some Breaches of their Law, therefore God appointed Atonement to be made for the lesser Transgressions of it, by Gifts and Offerings, and the Persons aforesaid to make those Offerings; but for the greater Sins, such as Idolatry, Perjury, Murder, Adultery, breaking their Sabbath, &c. no Sin-Offerings or expiatory Sacrifices were allowed; and for this Reason the Apostle, chap. vii. v. 18, 19. argues there is verily a Disannulment of the Commandment going before for the Weakness and Unprofitableness thereof; for the Law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in a better Hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God.

He adds, chap. ix. v. 9. That Gifts and Sacrifices could not make him that did the Service perfect, as pertaining to the Conscience. And chap. x. v. 4. That it is not possible that the Blood of Bulls and of Goats should take away Sins. And v. 6, 8. That in Burnt-Offerings and Sacrifices for Sins, God has no Pleasure; and he argues from thence, chap. v.

366 *The Independent Whig.*

v. 4, 10. and chap. vii from the 11th v. to the 19th, a Necessity that another Priest should arise after the Order of Melchisedeck, which was an higher Order, and that he should be perfect (being to become Author of eternal Salvation to all them who obey him) for if Perfection was in the Levitical Priesthood (under which the People received the Law) what need was there that another Priest should arise after the Order of Melchisedeck, and not after the Order of Aaron; for the Priesthood being changed, there is made a Necessity of the Change also of the Law.

And then he observes many Differences between our Saviour's and the Jewish Priesthood.

1. That this Priest was not made after the Law of a carnal Commandment, but after the Power of an endless Life.

2. That he was made a Priest, not without an Oath, which the Jewish Priests were not, v. 20, 21.

3. That they were many Priests, because they were not suffer'd to continue, by reason of Death; but this Man, because he continueth, hath an unchangeable Priesthood: Wherefore he is able to save them to the utmost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make Intercession for them, v. 23, 24, 25.

4. That the Law maketh Men High Priests, which have Infirmary; but such a High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from Sinners, and made higher than
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The Independent Whig. 367

the Heavens, who needeth not daily to offer up Sacrifices, first for his own Sins, and then for the People; for this he did once, when he offer'd up himself, v. 26, 27, 28.

5. That he obtained a more excellent Ministry, by how much he is Mediator of a better Covenant, which was established upon better Promises; for if the Covenant had been faultless, then should no Place have been sought for the second; for finding fault with them, saith the Lord, I will put my Laws into their Minds, and write them in their Hearts, and they shall not teach every Man his Neighbour, saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know me from the greatest to the least; for I will be merciful to their Unrighteousness, and their Sins and Iniquities I will remember no more; in that he saith, by a New Covenant, he hath made the first Old, and that which decayeth and waxeth Old, is ready to vanish away, chap. viii. v. 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13. and chap. x. ver. 16, 17.

6. In chap. ix. the Apostle compares the Rites and bloody Sacrifices of the Law, and shews how far inferior they are to the Blood and Sacrifice of Christ, who not by the Blood of Goats and Calves, but by his own Blood, enter'd at once into the holy Place, having obtained eternal Redemption for us; for if the Blood of Bulls and of Goats, and the Ashes of an Heifer sprinkling the Unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the Flesh, how much more shall the Blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit,

368 *The Independent Whig.*

rit, offer'd himself, without Blot, to God, to purge your Consciences from dead Works, to serve the living God? v. 12, 13, 14.

7. In *chap. 10.* he shews the Weakness of the Law-Sacrifices; which being offer'd up Year by Year continually, could not make the Comers thereto perfect, for then they would have ceased to have been offer'd, because that the Worshippers, once purged, should have had no more Conscience of Sins. Ver. 1, 2, Then said he, Lo I come to do thy Will, O God: He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second; by the which Will we are sanctified, through the Offering of Jesus Christ, once for all. Every Priest standing ministring, and offering the same Sacrifices, which can never take away Sins; but this Man, after he offered one Sacrifice for Sins for ever, set down at the Right Hand of God; for by one Offering he hath perfected for ever, them that are sanctified; that is, those who obey his Commands, v. 9, 10, 11, 12, 14. And in v. 18. he tells them, *Where Remission of Sins is, there is no more Offerings for Sins.*

In the rest of the Chapter, the Apostle exhorts the *Hebrews*, whom he calls his Brethren, to have the Boldness to enter in with him into the Holiest, by the Blood of Jesus; and having a High Priest over the House of God, to draw near with a true Heart, in full Assurance of having our Hearts sprinkled from an evil Conscience, and our Bodies washed with pure Water, and to hold fast the Pro-
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session of our Faith, without wavering; and to consider one another to provoke unto Love, and to good Works; not forsaking the assembling our selves together, as the Manner of some is; but exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the Day approaching. And he enforces his Argument, by telling them, that if we sin wilfully after the Knowledge of the Truth, there remaineth no more Sacrifice for Sins.

Now in all this Epistle, where this Matter is so fully and at large explained, (as well as in many other Parts of Scripture where the *Jewish* Priesthood, Rites and Ceremonies are plainly abolished) there is not one Word or Hint given of any other to be establish'd upon the Ruins of it. In all the Chapters I have quoted, no Priest, Sacrificer, Prophet, Mediator, Intercessor, Reconciler, Benedictor, Ambassador, or Spiritual Prince, is once mentioned, but Jesus Christ alone; though one might have expected to have met with him, or to have heard of him here, if there was to have been any such Person in Nature. On the contrary, the Apostle himself addresses to the *Hebrews* as his Equals, and claims no Right, Privilege, or Superiority over them; talks to them always in the Plural Number; nor does he, in the modern Phrase, say, *Pray ye, &c.* but joins himself with them in every Act of Love and Duty.

370 *The Independent Whig.*

If this was the Case of the *Hebrews*, who were Parties to the *Horeb* Contract, by which God became their Temporal King; and consequently, they became bound, and Subjects to all the Laws of *Moses*; the Argument is much stronger in behalf of the *Gentiles*, who were never any way concerned in the *Jewish* Priesthood, Rites and Ceremonies; and there must be therefore a very plain and positive Institution and Establishment found out in Scripture, before they can be subjected to it.




NUMBER

NUMBER XLVII.

Wednesday, December 7. 1720.

All Priestly Power inconsistent with the Gospel, and renounced by it.

 HAVE fully shewn, in my last Paper, that as there is but one Sacrifice in the Christian Religion, so there is but one Sacrificer or Priest, who, as our Church declares in the *Communion-Service*, made one Oblation of himself, and once offer'd up a full, perfect, sufficient Sacrifice, Oblation, and Satisfaction, for the Sins of the whole World; and agreeably to this Declaration, in the 13th Article, she calls the Sacrifices of the Popish Priests, *dangerous Deceits*, and *blasphemous Fables*.

I cannot with my best Enquiry find out, that in the whole Christian Religion, there are any new Rites and Ceremonies appointed, or any Offices erected; nor in the *Gos-*

pels, Acts or Epistles, does any thing like an Institution occur, except that of *Deacons*; which Office is now quite laid aside, unless it may be said to be revived by Virtue of the Act of Queen *Elizabeth*, which appoints Overseers of the Poor: for as to the modern Ecclesiastical Deacon, he has no Resemblance to the Scripture Officer, *who was appointed to serve Tables, upon Complaint of the Grecian Widows, who were neglected in the daily Ministration*, which the Apostles were not at Leisure to attend, because of *the preaching of the Word*, and therefore directed the Congregation to choose others, whose Business it should be. *Acts* chap. vi.

I shall therefore enquire how the Popish World came to be blessed with such a long Train of spiritual Equipage; and see what can be found in the Scriptures, to warrant or countenance their present Pretensions. In order to it, I shall observe, that Promulgation is of the Essence of a Law, which cannot be without Plainness and Perspicuity: It must not be express'd in doubtful and equivocal Terms: It must not depend upon critical Learning, or different Readings; nor receive its Explanation from the mysterious Gibberish, and unintelligible Jargon of the Schools; but ought to be such, as a plain, open, simple-hearted, sincere Man may easily discover, amidst the numerous and contradictory Schemes of the Ecclesiasticks.

Weak and corrupt Men may, thro' Ignorance or Design, frame and enact Laws obscure and unintelligible; but the Almighty cannot intend to mislead his Creatures, or want proper Words to express his Meaning: Even such human Laws as enact Penalties, or restrain the natural Liberty of Mankind, are always construed strictly, and extended no farther than the Letter expressly warrants; and 'tis much more reasonable it should be so understood in divine Laws, upon which the Temporal and Eternal Happiness of all the World depends; not only because of the Importance of the Subject, but as there can be no unwary Omission, or Defect in Words chosen by the Holy Ghost: We may therefore be very sure, that whatever is not expressed in Scripture, plain and clear to common Understandings, was not intended for our Instruction, or can become a Duty.

With our Eyes thus cleared up, we will view those Texts and Parts of Holy Writ, brought together to support this unweildy Fabrick. And here, for some Time, I must beg leave of my Reader, to stand amazed, and be at a Loss, which most to admire, the Stupidity and Acquiescence of the Popish and popishly affected Laity, or the daring Insolence and Impiety of their Ecclesiasticks; that without Reason, or the Appearance of Reason, without Scripture, or the Colour of Scripture, but directly in Defiance of them

both, they could be able to form so compleat an Empire over the Bodies and Minds of the greatest Part of *Christendom*; rob them of their Goods and Possessions, and make them Instruments of their own Ruin, hug their Chains, and mortally hate, murther, or ruin every one who would set them free.

But before I enter upon a particular Disquisition of the Texts produced, I would first enquire what Benefit can accrue to Christianity, by such Powers in the Christian Clergy. A *Roman* Judge is honourably mentioned by *Cicero*, for always asking *cui bono* an alledged Action was done; by which he could make some Judgment whether it was done or not, and who did it. The same is a reasonable Proceeding in this Case; for tho' it is no Objection to the Truth of what God has said, that it is not agreeable to the Sentiments of weak Men; yet whilst it remains a Question, whether God said it or not, there cannot be a stronger Way of arguing used, than to shew that it is unworthy of the divine Wisdom and Goodness, who can say nothing which is trifling and impertinent, or make any Ordinances useles or mischievous to his Creatures.

Nothing can come from God, but what is godlike; and therefore when any Number of Men combining together, dare tell me any thing in his Name, of no use to Religion or Virtue, and yet of apparent Advantage to themselves or their Order; I shall always be-

believe it to be an Invention of their own, forged to gratify their Ambition and Avarice, and shall ever vindicate the Almighty from the imputed Calumny.

Now of what use is it to Religion and Virtue, that the Clergy should always make one another? Whether the Imposition of Hands be esteemed barely a Ceremony, to denote a Person appointed to an Office, or be the Appointment it self? Or whether he be chosen by laying on of Hands, or by any other Ceremony? Will the same Person, with the same Qualifications, be a better Man, better Christian, or abler Divine, if he receives his Orders in a direct Line from the Apostles, thro' the Canal of a Popish, High-Church, or Presbyterian Priesthood, or if only from the Civil Magistrate, or Voluntary Societies? Or is it possible to believe, that whilst he is administering the Offices of Religion, and doing the Duties of the Gospel, the devout Christian People shall loose the Effects of their Piety, and the Benefit of Christ's Promises, for the Defect of any Circumstance, or any Omission or Superfluity in his Adoption, which they could neither prevent nor know? Sure we have not so learn'd Christ.

Can we suppose that Almighty God should make such an Establishment of Christianity, as must destroy Christianity it self; and put it under the sole Guidance and Direction of a Society of Men, who will have a perpetu-

376 *The Independent Whig.*

al Interest to overturn or pervert it, and ever did so when they had Power?

What can be suggested more absurd, than that the good God should send his Son from Heaven, to teach Virtue and Goodness to Men, to manumit and set them free from the Superstitions of the *Jews*, and the Idolatries of the *Gentiles*; who, whilst upon Earth, should not only disclaim all Power and Dominion himself, but suffer an ignominious Death, to make Mankind happy; and yet subject them to a Yoke, the most arbitrary and tyrannical in the World, without Redress, without Remedy; where the Governours have constant Temptations and Motives to oppress, and the Governed no Means to resist or oppose? For no less than this are the Popish and High-Church Demands upon us, and the inevitable Consequences of their wild and wicked Hypothesis.

If they are an Order of Men appointed directly by God, and have the Government of the Church by divine Right in all Things, which relate to Spirituals, (that is, in all Things wherein their own Interest is concern'd:) If they are to be sole Judges of their own Powers, and what Doctrines they are to teach; that the People are to receive them implicitly, and to submit to and be concluded by their Determinations, and if no human Authority must controul them; which I think those I write against all claim; (tho' scarce two of them agree in whose Hands,

or in what Part of the Clergy, these Powers are vested) then 'tis plain, they are possessed of the most despotick, unlimited, and uncontrollable Sovereignty in the Universe, and which of Necessity must prove, and actually ever has proved, the most Cruel and Tyrannical in the Exercise.

But if they have not this Power, they can have none at all, but what the Civil Magistrate or Voluntary Societies trust them with; for, what is the Name of a Power, which every Man is a Judge whether he will submit to, or not? Or how can that be said to be Divine, which the Civil Magistrate can controul at his Pleasure? There can be no Medium in Nature betwixt another's judging for me, and my judging for my self: If another is to judge for me, I must submit to his Determinations, let them be ever so absurd, monstrous or wicked; but if I have a Right to re-examine them, they can amount to no more than Advice, and my own Judgment alone must determine me.

As I think I have amply proved that 'tis inconsistent with the Goodness of God to trust the Powers so claimed with the Popish Clergy; so in my two next Papers, I will as fully prove that, in Fact, he has given them no Authority at all.

Indeed, to do them Right, the Popish Priests do not pretend to offer any direct Texts to their Purpose, expressing particularly the Powers given them, and the Persons
in

378 *The Independent Whig.*

in whom they are to be vested; as might be reasonably expected in a Case so nearly affecting the Liberties of all Mankind; and was actually done in the *Jewish* Dispensation, where every Circumstance relating to their Worship and the Priest's Office was minutely described; but instead thereof, they pick up scatter'd and disjointed Sentences, and set them together by the Ears, to try what they can get by the Scuffle: They argue from Types, Antitypes, Parables, Metaphors, Allegories, Allusions, Inferences, Patterns, Resemblances, Figures and Shadows, and by such Means can fetch every Thing out of every Thing.

The Bible is a Miscellaneous Book, from whence craz'd or designing Men, by joining or disjoining; by various Readings, corrupt or ignorant Translations; by far-fetch'd Interpretations, and putting different Meanings upon Words in Scripture from what they signify in any other Parts of Language; by trifling and knavish Distinctions, metaphysical Subtilties, no Definitions, but shifting the Significations of Words as they have Occasion; by References to ancient Customs, and Twenty other Theological Systems of Reasoning, may always fetch Materials to serve their loose or wicked Purposes; as we actually find an Hundred different, and many of them almost contradictory, Religions are pretended to be deduced from that Book; and if the Priests were let alone, they would
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find a Thousand more, and burn for them all, (I mean other People.) But if Men would be contented to judge of the Gospel Style, by the same Rule as they do of other Writings: If they could be perswaded that God Almighty, when he condescends to make use of human Language, intends to be understood, and consequently uses Words in their common Acceptation; that when he designed to reveal his Will to Babes and Sucklings (that is, to the Ignorant and Unlearned) he did not chuse to do it in Riddles, to make Way for Interpreters, and that the Popish Clergy might have a Pretence for picking the Laity's Pockets; then I affirm, that the Bible is the plainest, openest, most moral, significant and intelligible Book in the World, in all Things which can be the Duty of a Man to know; and in no Part of it more so, than in the present Dispute, which has been rendered so perplex'd and intricate by Craft and Artifice: And I undertake in my two next Papers to make this out.



N U M B E R X L V I I I .

Wednesday, December 14. 1720.

The same Subject continu'd.



HERE is nothing in the Four Gospels to authorize or countenance the Distinction of Ecclesiastical and Civil; for as our Saviour renounced all worldly Power himself, so he gave none. He neither used, nor allowed the Use of Force and Violence, to coerce and conquer Subjects to his Kingdom, which he declared was not of this World. As the Religion he taught was not to consist of outward Actions and Ceremonies, like the Worship of the *Gentiles*, but was to reside in the Mind, so he chose proper Means to attain his End: He knew the Sword might make Hypocrites and Slaves, but never Converts; therefore he instructed his Apostles to win Mens Affection by Love and Gentleness, to allure them by Example, and convince them
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by the Reasonableness of his Precepts, and he enabled them to prove their Mission by Wonders and Miracles; all which are directly contrary to the Proceedings of *Mahomet*, whose Aim was Temporal Dominion, and his Religion Imposture; and consequently Violence was necessary to propagate Both: for Absurdity can no Way be supported but by Tyranny; but Truth can ever defend itself, and desires nothing but a fair Examination, a free Hearing and equal Favour.

He takes every Occasion to caution his Apostles against spiritual Pride, and claiming Superiority over others, or one another: The Powers he gave them were of another Kind, such as were proper to overcome the Prejudices of the innocent and well-meaning, tho' misled People; and to confound the Malice and Subtilty of the governing Priesthood, (*viz.*) *A Power against unclean Spirits, and to cast them out; to heal all manner of Sickness, and all manner of Diseases; and to raise the Dead.* Sure no Clergyman pretends to these Powers.

He bids them provide neither Silver, nor Gold, nor Brass, in their Pockets; nor Skrip for their Journey; neither Two Coats, nor Shoes, nor Staves: Much less Coaches. I presume no Clergymen desires these Powers.

He orders them *when they come into any House, to salute it; and if they do not receive them, and hear their Words, to depart from that House,*

382 *The Independent Whig.*

House, and shake off the Dust of their Feet. The Popish Clergy are for setting Fire to such an House, (as they did lately to several) and for burning and damning every one within it.

The Apostles Commission was *to preach Christ to all Nations, in Matthew; and in Mark, to go into all the World, and to preach him to every Creature.* The Popish Priest stays at Home, and preaches himself only, to his own Parish for Money.

Those who *believed in the Apostles, and were baptized, had the Power of casting out Devils in Christ's Name, and speaking with new Tongues: They could take up Serpents; no deadly Thing they drank could hurt them; they laid Hands upon the Sick, and they recovered.* Those who believe in the Popish Priest are the best Friends the Devil has; and instead of casting him out, for the most Part bring him in: They can speak Sense with no Tongue; nor dare venture on any Poison, but what proceeds from Gluttony and Drunkenness, with which they give their Votaries Diseases, instead of recovering them.

The Apostles were *to be Witnesses of all which they had heard or seen said or done by our Saviour; and who else could be so?* But the Popish Priest has no other Means of knowing Christ, than any Layman of equal Abilities and equal Application; nor can have any greater Motive or Inducement to preach him, except his Hire; which, as it
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first suborn'd his Predecessors to betray his Person, and take away his Life, so it has ever since been the Occasion of Crucifying him a-new, by misrepresenting his Doctrines, and making them subservient to worldly Ambition and Interest; which is so universal, that no *Englishman* can set his Foot out of his own Country, but he sees the Clergy perverting the Scripture, and abusing the People.

Our Saviour himself appointed the Seventy Disciples, whom *he sent before him Two by Two, in every Place where he intended himself to go,* and gave them Powers almost equal to the Powers of the Apostles, (*viz.*) *to heal the Sick, to tread on Serpents and Scorpions, and over all the Power of the Enemy, and that nothing should hurt them;* but he was so far from giving any worldly Authority, that he tells them, *he sends them forth as Lambs amongst Wolves; that they should carry nothing with them, but whatsoever House they came into, they should say, Peace to that House, and should eat and drink such Things as the People gave them; and whatever City they came into, they should eat such Things as were set before them, for the Labourer is worthy of his Hire;* (here it seems the People were to judge what Wages and Hire they deserve) *and if any Persons refused to receive them, they were to go into the Streets, and shake off the Dust of their Feet at them;* which was all the Excommunication they were directed to use, and was nothing

thing else but to leave them in their Sins, and preach to them no longer.

Whatever is meant by the figurative and abstruse Texts of binding and loosing, remitting and retaining Sins, is evidently confined to those it is spoken to, and seems to have Relation to the other World alone.

Now I would be glad to know by what Rules of Construction can the Powers, now claimed by any Sett of Clergy in the World, be brought from these Texts, or in what Sense can any Clergyman be said to be a Successor of the Apostles, more than every Layman of equal Qualifications.

If our Saviour had intended to have conveyed down any Powers to any Man, or Set of Men whatsoever, it is impossible to believe but he would have expressed himself in the fullest and most significant Words; and left no doubt behind him what those Powers were, and to whom they belonged. No Statute enacted amongst weak Mortals is penned so loosely: What Lawyer in *Westminster-Hall* could have found out Sovereign Power in the Precept, *Feed my Sheep*? Or in our Saviour's Promise to assist the Apostles and perhaps all Christians in general, in these Words, *I will be with you to the End of the World*?

The Priests of *Delphos* uttering, for the most part, their Oracles in sorry and balderdash Poetry, gave Rise to a waggish Jest amongst the Ancients, viz. that *Homer* could
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write better Verses than *Apollo*, who inspired him. But sure no one among Christians will be so profane, as to give Occasion to the Suggestion, that the Attorney-General can draw up a clearer and more intelligible Commission than the Apostles.

But tho' there is nothing in the Gospels to justify or excuse the priestly Demands upon the Laity, yet there are many Texts expressly against them, in which our Saviour disclaimed all Authority over Men, and forbids his Disciples and Followers assuming Superiority over their Brethren, or censuring, judging, or using any one ill, for not receiving, or for opposing them.

In *Luke* the xiith, v. 13. A Man desires of our Saviour to speak to his Brother to divide his Inheritance with him; and his Answer is, *Who made me a Judge, or a Divider over you.*

In *John*, chap. xii. v. 47, 48. our Saviour declares, *If any Man hears his Words, and believes not, that he will not judge him; for he came not to judge the World, but to save the World.* And in the next Verse, leaves him to the Judgment of the Father, and tells him what will be his Doom.

In *John*, chap. xviii. v. 36. he was brought before *Pilate* for speaking Treason against *Cæsar*, and claiming the Temporal Kingdom of *Judæa*; and he took that Occasion to renounce all earthly Sovereignty, by declaring, *His Kingdom was not of this World,*

386 *The Independent Whig.*

and gave his Reason for it ; which so satisfy'd the *Roman* Governour, ever jealous of his Master's Authority, that he pronounced him innocent, and would gladly have released him, if the *Jewish Priests* would have suffered it.

In *Matthew*, chap. vii. v. 1, 2, 3. he says to his Disciples, *Judge not, lest ye be judged ; for with what Judgment ye judge ye shall be judged, and what Measure ye meet shall be measured to you again, &c.*

In *Luke*, chap. ix. v. 53. *James* and *John* desired of him, that they might command Fire from Heaven to punish the *Samaritans* for not receiving him ; which he was so far from consenting to, that he reproves them for it ; and tells them, *Ye know not what Spirit ye are of, for the Son of Man is not come to destroy the World, but to save the World.*

In the same Chapter, *John* said to him, *Master, we saw one casting out Devils in thy Name, and we forbid him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said, Forbid him not, for he that is not against us, is for us.* A plain Precept for Christians to tolerate one another.

Thro' the whole xviiiith Chapter of *Matthew*, our Saviour exhorts his Disciples to be humble, and to forgive Offences. And in the 15th Verse tells them, *If thy Brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his Fault between thee and him alone ; but if he will not hear thee, take one or two more with thee, &c.*

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and if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it to the Church, or Congregation: And if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be to thee like a Heathen or Publican; that is, have no more to do with him. And in the two Verses after, he tells them what a Church is, viz. When two or three are gathered together in my Name, I will be in the midst of them; and his Presence, methinks, should be effectual to constitute a compleat Church, tho' a Parson is not one of the Company.

Indeed the whole New Testament is a Lesson of Humility, Humanity and Morality; the Sermon upon the Mount is nothing else; and we every where find constant Precepts and Cautions against Pride and Domination.

In the xxiiid of *Matthew*, our Saviour spake to the Multitude, and to his Disciples, bidding them *not to be called Master, for one is your Master, even Christ, all ye are Brethren; but he that is greatest amongst you, shall be your Servant; and whoever does exalt himself, shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself, shall be exalted.*

In *Luke*, chap. xx. v. 46. he warns his Disciples to *beware of the Scribes, who desire to walk in long Robes, and love Greetings in the Markets, and the highest Seats in the Synagogues, and the chief Places at Feasts, (hear, O ye Popish Bishops, Priests and Deacons!) who devour Widows Houses, and for a Shew make long Prayers.*

388 *The Independent Whig.*

In *Luke* xxii. v. 24, 25, 26. *There was a Strife amongst the Apostles which should be the greatest. And Jesus said unto them, The Kings of the Gentiles exercise Authority over them; and they that exercise Authority upon them, are called Benefactors. But ye shall not be so; but he that is greatest amongst you, let him be as the Younger; and he that is Chief, as he that does serve. The same in Matthew, chap. xx. v. 25, 26, 27. And he enforces this Precept in Verse 28. from his own Conduct, viz. Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministred unto, but to minister.*

Our Saviour did not, like others, preach Doctrines to his Disciples which he refused to practise, but teaches them Modesty and Humility by his own Example: For in the 13th of *John* he washes their Feet himself, and bids them wash one another's. How different is this from the proud Spirit of his pretended Successors, who take Place of the Nobility and Gentry, and make the great Men of the Earth kiss their Slippers; salute them upon the Knee, as if they were Gods below, or Sovereign Princes; nay more, set themselves above the Crown it self; for what is it else they mean after saying Grace, and in their Cups by putting the Church (by which they mean Themselves) before the King and Royal Family? We all know too well their Kindness for the People (who are the Scriptural and Legal Church) to suspect that they mean them.

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Not many Years since, the constant Health amongst them was, King, Queen, and Church; but now all the High Clergy are guilty of the same Crime for which Cardinal *Woolsey* ought to have lost, and in all Likelihood would have lost his Head, if he had not prevented it, as it is said, by Self-Murther, *viz.* of setting themselves above the Crown, and *viva voce*, crying out, *Ego & Rex meus*, when they are in the Humour of owning him as such.

I shall hereafter write a Paper on Purpose on this Subject; but in my next shall shew, that the *Acts* and *Epistles* no more favour their wild Pretensions than the *Gospels*.



NUMBER XLIX.

Wednesday, December 21. 1720.

An Inquiry into Religious Establishments, with a further Confutation of the impious and absurd Claims of High Priests.



O many are the various and contradictory Opinions and Reasonings of Men, that no voluntary Society or Assembly can act, or long hold together without establishing certain Rules and Orders amongst themselves, regarding the Common Interests and Conduct of the Society, and appointing Persons whose Duty it shall be, to see those Orders put in Execution; and if any Member does not think it lawful or expedient to submit to the publick Regulations, they must have a Right to exclude him, or in other Words, to excom-

excommunicate him from their Body, if he does not chuse to separate himself.

If the Design of the Meeting is to worship God, to join in the same Prayers, and for Exhortation and Edification, (which Assembly is called a Church) there must be Time and Place appointed when, and where, they are to meet, and Persons to prepare and keep in order all Things necessary for their meeting: There must be one, or more, appointed to read those Prayers to the Congregation; in which they are to join, and to do all those Offices, which can be performed only by single Persons; and if the Society would avoid the Loquacity and Interruption of ignorant and conceited Members, they must confine Exhortation to one, or to a few Persons of approved Gravity and Wisdom. There must be also some Means of conferring and agreeing together, to support the common Expences of Buildings, Repairs, Utensils, &c. and consequently, there must be Debates, which cannot well be carried on without a President, Chairman, or Prolocutor, to regulate them, collect their Voices, and pronounce their Resolutions; without which Precautions they will be more likely to fight than pray.

If several of these Churches, residing at too great a Distance from one another to meet together, should esteem it their Duty or Advantage to join in the same Form of Worship, and unite in a common Interest to support it, they must find out some Means of Commu-

nication, and contrive some Cement of their Union, otherwise they would soon separate again: This may be done by chusing Deputies to represent them, and concert common Measures, or by submitting themselves to the Conduct and Determinations of one, or more Persons, chosen by common Consent, in all such Matters as do not interfere with their Duty to God; and the Persons so chosen can have no more Power, nor of longer Duration, than their Principals think fit to give them.

If these Churches think it their Duty or Interest to enlarge their Bottom, and make Converts, they cannot take a more effectual Method to do it, than to choose, appoint, or ordain discreet and honest Men, who are acquainted with their Way of Worship, their Ordinances, and the Reasons of them, and send them forth to teach, persuade, and convince others; to exhort them with Meekness and Love, (the likeliest Way to gain them) and afterwards to preside and watch over them, and thereby prevent their Straying and Apostatizing.

This was the Case in the Beginnings of Christianity, before National Churches were established, as well as the present Case of independent, voluntary Societies. The Apostles Commission was, *To go into all the World, and preach Christ to every Creature.* Which was impossible for them to do in their own Persons; and therefore as they made Con-

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verts, they exhorted them to convert others, as *Acts* viii. v. 1, 4. When the Apostles were left at Jerusalem, the Church was scattered abroad through all Judæa and Samaria, and those who were scattered abroad preached the Word. *Acts* xi. v. 13, 14. They that were scattered abroad upon the Persecution that arose about Stephen, travelled as far as Phœnice and Cyprus, and preached the Word to none but the Jews only; and some of them when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus Christ, Chap. iv. v. 4. Peter and John converted Five Thousand. And v. 31. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with Boldness.

And they were all enabled to prove their Mission, by having the Power of working Miracles; for *Mark* xvi. v. 17, 18. these Signs were to follow those who believed in Christ's Name. They could cast out Devils; they could speak with new Tongues; they could take up Serpents; no deadly Thing could hurt them; they could lay their Hands on the Sick, and recover them. *John*, chap. xxiv. v. 12. Our Saviour says to his Disciples, *Whoever believeth in me, the Works that I do shall he do, and greater than these shall he do*: Which Gifts would have been unnecessary, if they had been to have made no Use of them; and by Virtue of these general Powers given to all Christians, Philip and Stephen, who were chosen by the Congregation to the menial Office of serving Tables,

Tables, preached, baptized, and did many Wonders and Miracles, *Acts, chap. vi. v. 8. chap. viii. v. 7.*

But besides the common Right which every Man had to preach Christ, and propagate his Kingdom, the Apostles prevailed with particular Persons to undertake it, and make it their Business, who were to assist and oversee the Brethren, as a Shepherd does his Sheep : Having the Gift of discerning Spirits, they knew who were fittest for the Employment, and who would engage in it without any sinister Views ; but 'tis plain, they gave no Gifts or Advantages to them above other Christians. They could not give the Holy Ghost ; which Power was confined to the Apostles alone, and, as far as appears, was bestowed without Distinction upon all who believed and were baptized.

The Power of speaking with Tongues, as is above said, was given to all Believers ; which appears to be in Scripture, one constant and inseparable Mark of having received the Holy Ghost.

In *Acts* the 2d, v. 4. *The Holy Ghost fell on the Apostles, and they spake with Tongues.* In *Acts* x. v. 46. *While Peter spoke, the Holy Ghost fell on all who heard the Word, and the Jews were astonished when they heard the Gentiles speak with Tongues.* Chap. xix. v. 6. *Paul lays his Hands on certain Disciples, and the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with Tongues, and prophesied.* *Acts* the xith. v. 15.

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The Independent Whig. 395

Peter justifying himself to the *Jews*, for preaching to the *Gentiles*, says, *And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them as on us at the Beginning. Then remembered I the Word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with Water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost; for as much therefore as God gave them (viz. those who believed) the like Gift as he did to us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I that I should withstand God?* So that here, from the Mouth of *Peter* himself we have it, that the *Gentiles* who believed, had the same Gift as the Apostles. *Chap. viii. v. 14. When the Apostles at Jerusalem had heard that the Samaritans had received the Word, they sent to them Peter and John, who laid Hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost, which they had not received before, tho' they were baptized by Philip. In chap. ii. v. 38. Peter says to them of Israel, Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the Remission of Sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost; and v. 41. They gladly received the Word, and the same Day were added to them about Three Thousand Souls, who must have all consequently received the Holy Ghost. Chap. viii. v. 8, 9. Paul speaking of the Gentiles, says, God which knoweth the Hearts, bear them Witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us, and put no Difference between them and us, purifying their Hearts by Faith.*

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396 *The Independent Whig.*

Therefore it appears plain to me, that all who believed, especially by the Apostles Ministration, received the Holy Ghost, and could do Miracles; and consequently, the Persons aforesaid, by whatever Names they are called, were not designed to be an Order of Men distinct from other Christians, with different Powers and Privileges. They undertook, a Burthen, not a Command. They were better and poorer than other People, not their Lords and Masters; nor is there a Word in Scripture, whereby we can guess that they were intended to be Successors to the Apostles, much less that the Successorship was to continue to the End of the World; and 'tis evident in Fact, that there were no such appointed, because the Power of giving the Holy Ghost, and in Consequence of doing Miracles, soon ceased in the Church.

With this View, let us now examine the *Acts* and *Epistles*, and see what there is which contradicts it.

Acts xiv. v. 23. Paul and Barnabas ordained Elders in every City; and *chap.* xx. v. 17. Paul calls the Elders of the Church of Ephesus together; and v. 28. tells them their Duty, (*viz.*) *Take heed therefore unto your selves, and to all the Flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you Overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own Blood.* Here, luckily, the Word *Episcopus* is translated *Overseer*, and not *Bishop*, because it is explained in the Text, to import

The Independent Whig. 397

no more, than to feed the Church of God, that is, to assist them, to preach to them, to exhort them, to advise them, and give them good Examples ; but all this implies no Jurisdiction, nor had the Apostles any to give.

Thessalonians, chap. v. v. 12. *And we beseech you, Brethren, to know them which labour amongst you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you.* Here Paul, with all Humility, entreats the *Thessalonians*, that they will know, that is, take Notice of, and hearken to, those who labour for their Sakes, who watch over them, and admonish them to mend their Lives.

Ephesians, chap. iv. v. 7, 11. *Unto every one is given Grace, according to the Measure of the Gift of Christ ; and he gave some Apostles ; and some Prophets ; and some Evangelists ; and some Pastors and Teachers ; and in the next Verse tells for what (viz.) for the perfecting the Saints, (that is, all the Faithful) for the Work of the Ministry, and for the edifying the Body of Christ.*

Romans, chap. x. v. 14, 15. *How then shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed ? And how shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard ? And how shall they hear without a Preacher ? And how shall they preach unless they be sent ?* This relates plainly to the Teaching of the Apostles, who were sent to preach the Gospel to the unconverted World, that otherwise could have known

398 *The Independent Whig.*

known nothing of it, and possibly in a larger Sense may be extended to all Christians, who had the Power as well as the Means to preach it, and consequently might be said to be sent to do it ; but I should be glad to know, by what Skill in Chymistry it has been discovered, or how it came to be guessed, that the Clergy of the many Nations in *Europe*, as by Law severally established, were the Persons meant ; or if only one sort of them, which that is ; when 'tis plain, they have no other Means of knowing Christ than the Laity have, and for the most part can tell them no more than they knew before.

Hebrews, chap. xiii. v. 7. *Remember them which have the Rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God, whose Faith follow, considering the end of their Conversation: And,* v. 17. *Obey, by others translated, be persuaded by them that have the Rule over you, and submit your selves ; for they watch for your Souls, as those who must give Account.* Here it seems the Editors of our *English Bible* do not think fit to stand to their Translations ; for in the Margent, against the Words *Rule over you*, in both Verses, they have inserted the Word *Guides*, which does not give us altogether so frightful an Image.

The Word translated *Obey* in the last Verse, is explained by the Word *Remember* in the first ; and the Reason given in the One is, *because you are to consider the End of their Conversation* ; and in the other is, *because they*
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watch for your Souls; so that the Hebrews were exhorted to remember, hearken to, or be persuaded by their Guides, who had spoke to them the Word of God, which was the End of their Conversation, and who watched for their Souls: And, I think, all good Christians ought to do so still, when they know where to find them, and the Clergy have agreed amongst themselves who they are.

At the latter end of the second Epistle to *Timothy*, in our Edition of the Bible, he is said to be *the first Bishop of Ephesus*, by which, we are to understand, if we please, that he was in Possession of the Authority and Dignity of a Modern Prelate; but the Text says no such Matter: Indeed *Paul's 1st Epistle, chap. 1. v. 11.* says, that *the Glorious Gospel of Christ was committed to his Trust*, that is, he was intrusted to preach it. And, *v. 18.* he *commits the same Charge to Timothy*: But in *chap. iv. v. 12, 13.* he tells him what he is to do (*viz.*) he is *to be an Example to the Believers in Word, in Conversation, in Charity, in Faith, in Purity; and till he comes himself, he is to give Attendance to Reading, to Exhortation, to Doctrine*; and the rest of the Epistle is spent in telling him what Doctrine he is to preach.

In his 2d Epistle, *Paul* says unto him, *And the Things thou hast heard from me amongst many Witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful Men, who shall be able to teach others also*; which he expresses summarily before, in
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400 *The Independent Whig.*

these Words, *Lay Hands suddenly on no Man*; a Ceremony always used amongst the *Jews*, to denote a Person appointed for any Purpose, as well as on many other Occasions; so that *Paul* himself knew, by Inspiration, who was fit for his Charge, and *Timothy* was to make good Enquiry after *faithful Men*: But there is no Power here given *but to preach the Gospel, and to employ others to do it*; which I have shewn every one was at liberty to do, tho' all had not an equal Call, or were equally qualified for it; and therefore it was certainly good Advice to endeavour to find out such as were, and prevail upon them to undertake it.

In the Epistle to *Titus*, who it seems was another Bishop, he is directed *to set in order the Things which are wanting* (the Business amongst us of Church-Wardens and Vestry-Men) *and to ordain Elders in every City, as Paul had appointed him*; which alludes to private Directions before given, and proves nothing, but that *Paul* took the best Precautions and most prudent Measures to propagate Christianity, by reducing his Converts in every City, into orderly, though voluntary Societies, by finding out and appointing discreet and honest Men to assist and superintend the rest; and it cannot be doubted but the People who knew him to be inspired, would be advis'd by him, accept his Recommendations, and consequently hearken to, trust their Affairs, and be directed by the Wisdom
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of Persons so powerfully recommended; which Respect and Deference has been always paid by every Sect that ever appeared in the World to their first Founders, and for the most part to their after Leaders too.

These are all the Texts that I can at present remember, which are usually brought to support the Priestly Claims, except such as plainly relate to our Saviour himself, or his Apostles; but if any others occur hereafter, I shall take Notice of them in proper Time.

But what has all this to do with a formal and solemn Institution, and established Form of Government, a Political Oeconomy, or in Ecclesiastical Language and Stile, a Spiritual Hierarchy?

What, must sovereign and independent Power, (without which, as I have shewn in my 48th Paper, there can be in this Case no Power at all) depend upon figurative Expressions, and Allusions to Seniority of Age, as *Elders*; to mean and low Professions, as *Guides, Shepherds, Pastors, Teachers, Overseers*, notably translated *Bishops*? Or upon the critical Knowledge of antient Eastern Terms, of doubtful and disputed Significations, which would put it in the Power of the very few Men said to be skilled in the Oriental Tongues (which, for the most Part lick out all their Brains) to settle what Establishments or Religion they please.

The Prophets and Evangelists often speak after the Manner of the Eastern Nations,

which was for the most Part figurative; where, *for ever, to the End of the World*, and such like Language, was frequently used to denote a long Space of Time; and therefore general Expressions in Scripture are not always to be taken strictly, as *Covetousness is the Root of ALL Evil: Swear not AT ALL: Children and Servants obey your Parents and Masters in ALL things. Take no Care for to Morrow: Take no Thoughts for your Life, what you shall eat, what you shall drink, or what you shall put on: Whatever you ask of my Father in my Name, he will give it you. Submit your selves to one another: Ye younger be subject to the elder; yea be subject to one another: And there were many other Things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written, the whole World could not contain the Books; and more than an hundred others of the same kind.* When such Passages occur, we must construe them by the Rules of Eternal Righteousness, the Reason of the Thing, and the general Bent of Scripture, and then we cannot mistake their Meaning, but in such Cases as are of no Consequence, whether we do or not.

Besides, almost all Words vary their Meaning by Time, and every one of the least reading, knows that there is scarce a Word in Nature, (except the proper Names of Persons, Places, and Things) that is answer'd by any other in a different Language, so as to comprehend exactly the same Number of Ideas; nor is it
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probable that any two Persons of the same Nation ever used one such Word minutely to the same Purpose; but if they were ask'd to give an adequate Definition of what they meant by it, would differ in some Particular: therefore 'tis absurd to suppose that Mens Duty and Eternal Salvation should depend upon the nice Signification of single *Hebrew* and *Greek* Words; Languages so long since out of common Use, and dead.

The Almighty is too merciful to his Creatures to leave them at such Uncertainties, which is in effect to let them throw Cross and Pile for their Religion: When he makes an Establishment, and gives Laws to Mankind, he always expresses himself in a manner not to be misunderstood; so he did in the *Jewish* Dispensation, where there was no dispute about the Meaning of their Law; though there is nothing in Scripture to countenance these Pretensions, yet the Gospel almost every where forbids them, as I have partly shewn in my last Paper, and shall unanswerably make out hereafter, when I shall more fully consider the *Acts* and *Epistles*; and then I will shew that the Apostles themselves claim'd no Authority over other Christians, or any Power but of Perswasion. I shall endeavour to shew what is meant by Baptism and the Lord's Supper; and do undertake to prove, that the Clergy have no more Power from Scripture to administer them than Women and Laymen, and that nothing is meant

by Excommunication, but not keeping ill Company: I will shew too that the Clergy, in the first Ages of Christianity, were always chosen by the People, and lived upon their Alms, and by what Steps of Impiety and Forgery the *Popish* Priesthood came to be Lords of so great a Part of the Terrestrial Globe.

N U M B E R L.

Saturday, December 24. 1720.

Of the Three High-Churches in England.



HAVING in my former Papers given some Account of the Scripture-Church; I shall, in this, give an Account of the *Three High Churches in England*, which are very different from it. And tho' in order to this, I shall be oblig'd to take in a good deal of Matter, and reveal many *High-Church* and *Jacobite Secrets*; yet, I hope to give the Town a clear Notion of them,

them, in the Compass of one Paper. I shall, *First*, state what the *true Church of England* is; and then describe the *Three High-Churches of England*, shewing how they differ from one another, and from the *true Church of England*.

I. *First*, What the *true Church of England* is. All Churches by Law establish'd, are Creatures of that State, where they are so establish'd. For whatever is establish'd, necessarily depends on the Legislature, which can and does repeal and enact whatever it thinks fit, and always calls its present Constitution in Religion, *The Church by Law establish'd*. The Church of *England* therefore by Law establish'd, is whatever the Legislature has enacted, and continues in Force, in relation to Religion, together with whatever is *enjoined* by the Authority of the King, or is determin'd by the proper Judicatories, acting by the Authority of, and in Subordination to, the Legislature. Thus the Act of Parliament requiring the Subscription of the *Thirty-nine Articles*; the Acts of Uniformity, and the Act of Toleration; the King's Injunctions, the Canons of Convocation confirm'd by the King; the Sentences of the Delegates, and the Determinations of the House of Lords, constitute the Church of *England*: And the Members thereof are good and true Members, who conform their Belief and Practice to the several Particulars aforesaid: As on the other side, they fall

short of being good and true Members, who recede from any Particular establish'd and settled as aforesaid. Nor can those be truly said to agree with and conform to a Church, who do not agree with and conform to it in the Sense intended by the Makers of the several Constitutions of that Church. This last is so plain a Truth in it self, and so manifestly imply'd in taking all Oaths, and making Subscriptions and Declarations, that it would have been needless to have observ'd it, had it not been for the Equivocation and Jesuitism of so many of our Priests, who think they may take Oaths, and make Subscriptions, in Senses contrary to, and different from, the Intention of the Imposers, and yet be good, and true, and perfect Members of the Church.

II. Now the High-Churches, which differ from this Establishment, are *Three* in Number; which I shall rank under the Names of the most remarkable Leaders in them. 1. Dr. *Bungey's* High-Church. 2. Mr. *Lesley's* High-Church. 3. And Dr. *Brett's* High-Church. The Two last are in an open Separation from one another, as well as from the true Church of *England*. But Dr. *Bungey's* High-Church has as yet made no Separation from the *True Church*. He and his People are only Schismatics in the Church, (as were those upon whom St. PAUL charges *Schism*, when they were met together in the same Church, *1 Cor. xi. 18.*) being as his present Grace
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of *Canterbury* describes some High-Church Priests, a new Sort of *Disciplinarians* risen up among our selves, who seem to comply with the Government of the Church, as others do with that of the State; not out of Conscience of their Duty, or any love they bear to it, but because they cannot keep their *Preferments* without it: They hate our Constitution, and revile all such as stand up in good earnest for it; and yet, for all that, go on to *Subscribe and Rail*; which Passage, from so great an Authority, cannot be too often quoted.

But to proceed to the Description of these Three High-Churches, in their Order.

1. Dr. *Bungeo's* High-Church stands distinguish'd from the *True Church of England*; by their *Arminian* Doctrines, contrary to our old Orthodox *Calvinistical* Articles; by their Enmity to the Act of Toleration, and to the Principles on which it is grounded; by their claiming an Independent Power in Priests to make Laws, and govern the Church; which is contrary to the Laws of *England*, that place the Power of making Church-Laws in other Hands, and particularly contrary to the Oath of Supremacy, which makes his Majesty Supreme Head of the Church; by teaching the Doctrines of Hereditary Right and Passive Obedience, contrary to the Judgment and Practice of the Legislature at and since the Revolution, and to the Determination of the House of Lords, on the Impeachment of Dr. SACHEVEREL, and

408 *The Independent Whig.*

their *Condemnation* of the *Oxford Decree* ; and by a Spirit of Faction against the present Establishment in State, and against his Majesty's Measures ; by Rebellion and Perjury, by Uncharitableness to all Foreign, and more especially to Domestick Protestants ; and by an implacable Fury and Malice towards all Dissenters among us, besides *Jews* and *Papists* : In which they act contrary to the known loyal Principles of our Church ; to its Opinion of all Foreign Protestant Churches, which it esteems true Churches ; to its Principles, which all tend to preserve Liberty and Property ; and to its known charitable and peaceable Temper, and Regard to tender Consciences.

2. The Second High-Church is, Mr. LESLEY's High-Church. At the Revolution several Bishops, who were deprived by Act of Parliament, for not taking the Oaths to the Government, made an open Separation from the Church of *England* ; and pretended, that they and their Adherents were the Church, charging those who fill'd their Sees with being Usurpers, and setting up Altar against Altar ; and also charging them and their Adherents, together with all the other Bishops, Clergy and Laity, who join'd in the same Communion with the usurping Bishops, with *Schism*. Hereby also they distinguish themselves in Principles from the Church of *England* ; which, being a legal Establishment, asserts to the Legislature, which has a Right to preserve their Peace, a Right to deprive Bi-

Bishops for Crimes against Law. They do not indeed so much distinguish themselves in Principles from Dr. *Bungey's* Church, as they do from the true Church of *England*: For the Doctor's Church equally contends with Mr. *Lesley's* Church against the Parliament's Right to deprive Bishops, and calls it Usurpation on the Rights of the Church; but is for Submission to such usurp'd Exercise of Power; and contends, Schism to be on the Side of those, who separate on a Principle of defending the Rights of the Church, against an Usurpation of those Rights.

This new separate Church agrees with Dr. *Bungey's* Church, in the other Principles before-mention'd, which distinguish the Doctor's Church from the true Church of *England*. But in Point of Honesty, or Adherence to those Principles, it greatly differs from the Doctor's Church, which goes on to *Subscribe*, and swear, and practise contrary to what they do subscribe and swear; Mr. *Lesley's* High-Church honestly practising in several Respects according to its villanous Principles.

3. Proceed we now to Dr. *Brett's* High-Church. Soon after King GEORGE'S Accession to the Crown, the Bishops of the last mention'd High-Church did all, except one, assemble in a Synod, where they resolv'd upon making *Four Alterations* in the Common Prayer Book, viz. 1. *To mix Water with the Wine in the Sacrament.* 2. *A Prayer for the Dead.*

410 *The Independent Whig.*

Dead. 3. A Prayer for the Descent of the Holy Ghost, upon the Bread and Wine in the Sacrament. 4. An Oblatory Prayer; which goes upon the Ground, that the Eucharist is a proper Sacrifice. All which Dr. Brett is not only an Advocate for, as an Author, but (perhaps) as *Titular Archbishop of Canterbury* exercised his Authority in enjoining. This has split the last High-Church into two Churches; Dr. Brett and his Followers adhering to the Bishops, or Church Governors of their Church, in Behalf of Wine and Water, &c. and Mr. Lesley and his Followers adhering to one Bishop only, in Behalf of Wine, &c. contrary to the Determination of their own Bishops, and all their own Principles, about the Authority of Bishops and Clergy.

To render my Account of our several High-Churches of *England* more compleat; I shall, by Way of Supplement, observe, that there is a Distinction in Dr. Bungey's Church; and his High-Church may be divided into two High-Churches. Some of his High-Church are Swearers to the Government, and say the Church Prayers for his Majesty King GEORGE and his Family, continuing at the same Time disaffected to him, and Enemies to his Legal Title. Others of the Doctor's High-Church are *Non-swearers*; and, tho' they come to the Church, disown joining with the Swearers in the Prayers for the King and his Family; whose Practice the profound Mr. DODWELL has defended

fended in a Book, (whose Title I shall, upon Memory, venture to give the Reader) intitled, *A further Prospect of the Case in View; Proving, that it is our Duty to be present at sinful Prayers, made sinful by the Mistake of Fallible Superiors, who have a Right of imposing Prayers.* So that, I think, the High-Churches of *England* may not improperly be reckon'd *Four* in Number; which may be justly distinguish'd by Things, as well as by Names of Men, after the following Manner.

- I. The Swearing and Forswearing High-Church.
- II. The Non-swearing High-Church, that contends for being present at the *sinful Prayers* of the Church.
- III. The Non-swearing Wine and Water Church.
- IV. The Non-swearing No Water Church.



NUMBER LI.

*Wednesday, December 28. 1720.**An Analogy between ancient Heathenism
and modern Priestcraft.*

S Extremes meet in a Point, and Corruption in Terrestrial Bodies is the next State from Perfection; so all the Commands and Denunciations of Heaven have not been able to keep the Christian Priesthood, in most Countries, from running Headlong into the Superstitions and Follies of the *Gentile* Idolaters. By a strange sort of Fatality, they have jump'd in the same Thoughts, and play'd over and over again, the same Tricks; insomuch, that if we but make small Allowances for the constant Alterations of Time, and such as must necessarily result from different Languages and Fashions, the present *Romish* Churches might be easily mistaken for Heathen Temples, and the

the Services performed in them for *Pagan* Worship.

The Devil, as subtle and cunning as he is represented to be, with all the Assistance of corrupt Priests, has not been able to find out a new Device, but has ever danced the Hay, and made his Rounds within the same Circle. The same Arts and Stratagems have been always made use of to seduce and delude Mankind; the same Advantages taken of their Weaknesses and Passions, and in all Times equally applied to destroy true Religion, advance the Priesthood, and make the honest and industrious, but unthinking, Part of the World, the Prey and Property of Hypocrites and Impostors.

The All-powerful, All-wise, and All-merciful God himself, is too often represented like the Heathen Deities, to be revengeful, cruel, capricious, impotent, vain, fond of Commendation, and Flattery; and, in effect, subject to all the other Passions and Imperfections of the weakest Men: His Being, which is boundless as Extension, and which the whole World cannot contain, is pretended to be confined to single Structures, and narrow Edifices built with Hands; nay, to Parts of those Edifices; where he is supposed to be pleased and gratified, like frail Mortals, with costly Furniture, gilded Roofs, engraven and polished Marble, fine Carving, and other curious, tho' baubling Workmanship of Mechanicks and Artificers.

414 *The Independent Whig.*

I confess I am not wise enough to find out any essential Difference between the present and the old *Roman* Worship: They both dedicate their Temples to dead Men and Women, whom the Papists call Saints, and the Pagans called Demi-Gods and Goddeses: The latter Forms of *Hocus Pocus*, which they called Consecrations; and were intended to conjure and call down their Deities to inhabit personally their Temples, their Images and Idols: The Popish Priests consecrate their Churches for the same Purpose, *viz.* to obtain the more immediate Presence of the Deity: Like the old *Romans* too, they erect Altars in their Temples, where they worship Saints with Supplications, Tears, Grimaces, antick and distorted Faces and Gestures, Musick, and Ceremonies, and tender Offerings and Oblations to them; and, like the others, often make Processions, Cavalcades, and Shews in their Honour; and sometimes go in Pilgrimages to them to obtain their Favour.

The Popish Priests have prophaned the plain and simple Direction of our Saviour to his Disciples, for commemorating the Benefits we have received by his Death, by turning it into an old *Roman* Sacrifice: Amongst them, the Pipers and Harpers were the Fore-runners of the Shew; and before the modern Sacrifice, the Organs strike up a Tune: There the Priests went up to the Altar in a white Garment free from Spots, (being an Emblem of Innocence;) in new *Rome* the Priest wears

a white Surplice: The Heathen Priest turned about to the *East*, being the Region of the Rising Sun, and bowed; the Popish Priest does the same: The Horns of the Beast sacrificed were marked with Gold, and his Blood received in Golden and Silver Vessels; here the pretended Christian Sacrifice of the real Body and Blood of Christ, is poured into the same costly Cups, or laid upon as rich Plates and Dishes: The old *Roman* Altar was raised, by several Steps, above the Floor of their Temples; so is the present. The Priest, amongst them, made a crooked Line with his Knife from the Head to the Tail of the Victim; the Popish Priest plays Tricks of *Legerdemain* with his Fingers over the Elements: Lastly, When the Beast was consecrated and killed, the Heathen Priests regaled themselves upon what was left, after their Gods were served; the *Romish* Priests make it prophane for any Layman to drink of the consecrated Wine, or for any one even to eat the Bread but the Communicants.

The old *Romans* had different Orders of Priests, with different and distinct Offices and Revenues, viz. the *High Priest*, the *Luperci*, the *Augurs*, the *Haruspices*, the *Pontifices*, the *Flamines*, *Salii*, *Feciales*, *Sodales*, the *Duumviri*, *Decemviri*, *Quindecemviri*, the Keepers of the *Sybilline Books*, the *Corybantes*, &c. The present *Romans* (besides the several Sorts which are in Use and Fashion amongst us) have a *Pope*, *Cardinals*, *Dominicans*,

416 *The Independent Whig.*

nicans, Franciscans, Jesuits, Carmelites, Benedictines, Mendicants, Capuchins, Cisterrians, Observantines, Augustines, Servites, &c. In imitation also of the Vestal Virgins, in old *Rome*, they have founded several Orders of Nuns, who take a Vow of Chastity, for the Breach of which they are immured, as the others were burned alive : And as they had a Right to deliver from the Hands of Justice, any Malefactors they casually met in their Walks ; so the present *Romish* Priests claim and exercise an equal Right to protect all Criminals who can fly to them for Protection, which is borrowed from that of the old *Roman* Asyla.

The old *Romans* had their *Dies fastos & nefastos*, their Fasts and Feasts, their *Sacrificia*, their *Epulas*, their *Ferias*, in Honour of their Gods and Demi-Gods ; the present *Romans* also make distinctions of Days a great part of their Religion ; they too have their *Dies fastos & nefastos*, their stated Fasts and Feasts in Honour of their Saints, or to commemorate and condole past Misfortunes, or rejoice over signal Successes ; and some of their Feasts, and particularly their Carnivals, exceed in Lewdness and Prodigality the Bacchanalia of the Ancients.

The Heathens had their *Deos Tutelares*, to whom the Defence of certain Countries were committed ; and their *Deos Presides*, who had the Safe-guard of particular Cities ; the Papists have Saints, who supply the same Offices :

Offices: Artificers and Professions have also their particular Saints who preside over them; Scholars have their Saint *Nicholas*, and Saint *Gregory*; Painters, Saint *Luke*; as Soldiers and Lovers had formerly their *Mars*, and *Venus*: Diseases too have their Saints to cure them; as the Pox, Saint *Roque*; the falling Evil, Saint *Cornelius*; the Tooth-Ach, Saint *Apollin*: And even Beasts and Cattle have their's; Saint *Loy* is the Horseleech, and Saint *Anthony* the Swineherd.

As the Heathen Priests would suffer none to come into their Sanctuaries but themselves; neither will the *Popish* Priests permit any Layman to come within the Rails of the Altar, and profane with unhallowed Feet that Holy Place. As the Ancients obliged all who were initiated into their Mysteries to confess, under the most severe Denunciations, all the Secrets of their past Lives, by which Means they were so much in their Power, that they never afterwards durst blab out what they saw, nor give the least Opposition to their Designs; so the *Romish* Priests trust their Mysteries only to the *vere Adepti*, and have made the same use of Confession, (the loss of which is sorely lamented by others;) for they oblige, upon the Penalty of Damnation, all their Votaries to confess not only their private Sins, but secret Thoughts, as well as every Thing else they know of other Peoples, which may any way regard the Interests of their Order;

418 *The Independent Whig.*

and so have Possession and fast hold of all Families, and become acquainted with all the Designs, which may ever thwart their Pride; and consequently have secured their own Domination, and the Peoples Misery, beyond almost a possibility of Redress.

Lastly, as the Heathen Priests sacrificed Goats to *Bacchus*, for browsing his Vines; and Men to *Pluto* and *Proserpina*, and other angry Deities, to appease their Wrath, and avert Evils from themselves; so the Popish Priests sacrifice and devote their Enemies, under the Names of *Hereticks* and *Schismatics*, to the infernal Fiend: And as those Idolaters were allowed to know when was the most proper Time to make their Sacrifices to their Deities, and what Victims would be most acceptable to them, as being presumed to understand best the Minds of their provoked Gods; so the present Ones are in Possession of the sole Judgment of what is Heresy, and of sacrificing by that Means whom they please to their Ambition and Revenge; which equally subjects the unhappy Laity to them.

They have also imitated the Heathens in making every human Foible and Imbecility, as well as every common and uncommon Appearance in Nature, contribute to their Interests; which shall be the Subject of my next Paper.

NUMBER LII.

Saturday, December 31. 1720.

Priestly Empire founded on the Weaknesses of Human Nature.



HERE is not a living Creature in the Universe, which has not some innate Weakness, or original Imbecility co-eval to its Being ; that is, some Inclinations or Disgusts, some peculiar Desires or Fears, which render it an easy Prey to other Animals, who, from their constitutional Sagacity or Experience, know how to take Advantage of this Infirmary ; of which it would be needless, as well as endless, to enumerate Particulars ; my Purpose being only to shew, that all the Dignity of human Nature, and the Superiority which Almighty

God has given to Man above other Beings, has not exempted him from this Imperfection ; which probably was left in his Fabrick, to put him in mind of his Mortality, humble his Pride, and excite his Diligence.

The peculiar Foible of Mankind, is Superstition, or an intrinsick and pannick Fear of invisible and unknown Beings. It is obvious to every one, that there must be Causes in Nature for all the Good or Evil which does, or ever can happen to us ; and it is impossible for any Man so far to divest himself of all Concern for his own Happiness, as not to be solicitous to know what those Causes are ; and since, for the most part, they are so hidden and out of sight, that we cannot perceive or discover them by our own Endeavours, we conclude them to be immaterial, and in their own Nature invisible ; and are, for the most part, ready to take their Accounts, who have the Dexterity to make us believe that they know more of the Matter than we do, and that they will not deceive us.

To this Ignorance and Credulity joined together, we are beholden for the most grievous Frauds and Impositions, which ever did, or do yet oppress Mankind, and interrupt their Happiness, *viz.* for the Revelations and Visions of Enthusiasts, for all the forged Religions in the World, and the Abuses

buses and Corruptions of the true One; as well as all the idle and fantastical Stories of Conjurers and Witches, of Spirits, Apparitions, Fairies, Dæmons and Hobgoblins, Fortune-Tellers, Astrologers, and the Belief in Dreams, Portents, Omens, Prognosticks, and the several Sorts of Divinations, which, more or less, disturb the greatest Part of the World, and have made them the Dupes and Property of Knaves and Impostors in all Ages.

Every thing in the Universe is in constant Motion, and where-ever we move we are surrounded with Bodies, every one of which must, in a certain Degree, operate upon themselves and us; and it cannot be otherwise, that in the Variety of Actions and Events, which happen in all Nature, but some must appear very extraordinary to those who know not their true Causes. Men naturally admire what they cannot apprehend, and seem to do some sort of Credit to their Understandings, in believing whatever is out of their Reach, to be Supernatural.

From hence perpetual Advantages have been given to, and Occasions taken by, the Heathen and Popish Priests, to circumvent and oppress the credulous and unwary Vulgar; what fraudulent Uses have been made of Eclipses, Meteors, epidemical Plagues, Inundations, great Thunder and Lightnings, and other amazing Prodigies, and seeming

Menaces of Nature? What juggling Tricks have been or may be acted with Glasses, speaking Trumpets, Ventriloquies, Ecchoes, Phosphorus, magick Lanthorns, &c. in the ignorant Parts of the World? The *Americans* were made to believe, that Paper and Letters were Spirits, which conveyed Mens Thoughts from one to another; and a dancing Mare was, not many Years since, burnt for a Witch in the Inquisition in *Portugal*.

Nature works by a Thousand Ways imperceptible to us: The Loadstone draws Iron to it, Gold Quicksilver; the sensitive Plant shrinks from the Touch; some sorts of Vegetables attract one another and twine together; others grow farther apart; the treading upon the Torpedo affects, and gives raging Pains to our whole Bodies; Turkey-Cocks and Pheasants fly at a red Rag; a Rattle Snake, by a sort of magical Power in his Eyes (as it is said) will force a Squirrel to run into his Mouth; Musick will cure the Bite of a *Tarantula*; the Frights and Longings of Women with Child, will stamp Impressions upon the Babes within them; People, in their Sleep, will walk securely over Precipices, and the Ridges of Houses, where they durst not venture, when awake; Lightning will melt a Sword without hurting the Scabbard.

There is something within us, which we all feel, that baffles and gets the better of our best Reasonings and Philosophy; and this shews it self in Love, in Fear, in Hatred, Ambition, and almost every Act of the Mind; but in nothing so much as in Superstition: Sometimes we find a secret Pannick, and at other times a strange and uncommon Energy, or Feeling of a mighty Power within us; and not being able to account, by any Conduct of Reason, or other Causes in Nature, for such Perceptions, are easily perswaded to believe them to be Supernatural: And from hence great Philosophers, Poets, Legislators, famous Conquerors, and often Madmen, have been thought in many Ages, by themselves as well as others, to be inspired; and even Distempers, such as, Apoplexies, Epilepsies, Prophetick Fits and Trances have been deemed miraculous.

Nothing strikes so strongly upon our Senses, as what causes Surprize and Admiration: There are very few Men, who are not affected with unusual Sounds and Voices, the Groans of others in Misery, the Solemnity of a Coronation, or any publick Shew, the Pomp of a Funeral, the Farce of a Procession, the Power of Eloquence, the Charms of Poetry, the rich and splendid Equipage of great Men, or the solemn Phiz and Mien of an Enthusiast. Whoever therefore can find out the Secret of hitting luckily upon this

Foible and native Imbecility in Mankind, may govern them and lead them as he pleases. And herein has consisted the greatest Skill and Success of crafty Priests in all Ages: They have made use of this Power to turn us and wind us to all their Purposes, and have built and founded most of their Superstitions upon it; and consequently, have ever adapted their Worship rather to catch our Passions, than convince our Minds, and enlighten our Understandings; all which is directly contrary to the Spirit of Christianity and the Precepts of our Saviour, as shall be fully shewn in the next Paper.

For this Reason the Heathens built their Temples in Groves, in solitary, dark and desert Recesses, by or over Caverns, Grottoes, or in the midst of echoing and resounding Rocks, that the hideous and dismal Aspect, and often hollow and hoarse bellowing of such Places, might strike a solemn Awe and religious Horror into their Votaries, and sometimes help their Imaginations to hear Voices, and see Forms, and so intimidate and prepare them for any Stories and Impressions, which they should think it their Interest to make.

The Popish Priests have admirably well aped these their Predecessors; by building their Churches dark and dismal, with figured and painted Windows, to let in a false and
glim-

glimmering Light; arched and contrived in such manner, as to resound the Voice hollow and shrill; with many private Apartments, Cœmetaries for their Saints, proud Inscriptions, whispering Places, secret Chappels for Confessions, saying Masses, Dirges, Penances, &c. Like the Heathens too, they build their Temples solemn and magnificent, in antick and uncommon Figures, adorn them with Silver and Gold, rich Carpets, curious Statues, and Images stuck about with Jewels; and their Priests appear in gaudy Vestments, and fantastical Robes and Caps, and perform their Worship with Musick and affected Ceremonies; all which Pageantry and Farce is calculated, and intended to act upon the Passions, attract the Eyes, amuse, lull and suspend the Understanding, and draw Admiration and Reverence to those who preside in these haughty Fabricks, and this pompous Adoration: Their Bells too, which call the People together, are contrived to emit such Sounds, as affect the Minds of most People, with a sort of superstitious Melancholly.

Indeed, as the Romish Priests are more numerous, have vastly larger Revenues, and more Leisure, so they have greatly improved upon the Heathens in this Art of deceiving; insomuch, that there is scarce an Imperfection or Error of human Nature, which is not adopted into their Scheme, and made subservient

servient to their Interest. Men of sprightly Genius and Courage are caught by their Ambition, are highly honoured, flattered, and raised up by their general Voice to the highest Dignities, and then are indulged in all their Passions, and gratified with Confessors, who are not only to overlook or pardon, but assist them in their vicious Pleasures; by which Arts those great Talents, instead of being nobly employ'd to free Mankind from sacerdotal Usurpations, are meanly perverted to support and aggrandize the monkish Empire.

Men of violent and impetuous Tempers, are suitably employ'd to execute their Tyrannical Designs, and to take Vengeance of their Enemies; and the Debauched and Wicked are made to buy their Peace of Heaven, by giving Money and Lands to the Priests; but none contribute so much to advance their System, as Visionaries and Enthusiasts: There are, in all Countries, Multitudes of People, whom Ignorance, Pride, Conceit, ill Habit of Body, melancholly and splenatick Tempers, unfortunate Circumstances, causeless and secret Fears, and a pannick Disposition of Mind, have prepared to be the Objects, as well as Instruments of Delusion, and they have been ever made use of accordingly.

Some of these are thrust or decoyed into religious Houses, or perswaded to lead retired,

retired, recluse and austere Lives, and to torture and punish themselves with Whippings, Penances, Fasting, and to walk Bare-foot, to astonish the gaping Multitude, and thereby gain Reverence to the Priesthood, for their fancied Holiness; whilst the governing Ecclesiasticks feast and riot in delicious Banquets, ride in State with Coaches and Six, attended by numerous Servants in costly Liveries; and Earth and Sea is ransacked, and Heaven it self profaned, to maintain their Luxury and Pride.

Such amongst them as are disposed to hear Voices and see Forms, shall hear and see enough of those, which are real ones, and afterwards be made use of to divulge them; and in order to it, their Sanctity shall be proclaimed abroad, and their mad and incoherent Speeches be called Revelations, heavenly Dispensations, and incomprehensible Mysteries. Such crazed and fanatical Men and Women have been the Founders of most of the Colleges, Monasteries, and Nunneries of the *Romish* Church, (to say nothing of others) and their Follies and Madness been the Support of the Papal Dominion.

But this artificial Devotion, this mechanick Religion has nothing to do with Christianity; which is natural Religion restored and improved, and consists in Virtue and Morality, and in being useful and beneficent to one another, as I shall shew in my next Paper.

The

428 *The Independent Whig.*

The Prophets have taught us the same Lesson: The First Chapter of *Isaiah* fully shews, that Religion does not consist in *Sacrifices, in Burnt-offerings of Rams, and the Fat of fed Beasts, in the Blood of Bullocks, and of Lambs, and of He-Goats, in vain Oblations, Incense, New Moons, Sabbaths, and Calling of Assemblies, in appointed Feasts, or many Prayers*; but in doing Good to Mankind. The Prophet sums up our Duty in these Words, *Cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek Judgment, relieve the Oppressed, judge the Fatherless, plead for the Widow*; for, as another Prophet says, *What doth the Lord require of thee, O Man, but to do justly, and to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* Micah, chap. vi. v. 8.



NUMBER LIII.

Wednesday, January 4. 1720.

In what only true Religion consists.



Have undertaken in this Paper to prove, what, methinks, should want no Proof; namely, that the All-powerful God is not a whimsical and humorous Being, that governs his Creatures by Caprice, and loads them with arbitrary and useless Burthens, which can serve no good Purpose in Nature.

The Almighty is infinitely happy in his own Perfections, and cannot receive Pleasure from such Things or Actions, as only the weakest Men are fond of, and the wisest condemn. He is not capable, like Mortals, of being ruffled by Accidents, or surprized by Disappointments. Wisdom, Goodness and Felicity, are essential to his Being; and consequently,

frequently, he could have no View in creating Mankind, but their own Happiness; for we can neither add to his, nor take away from it.

It is absurd therefore to suppose, that there can be any Merit in bare Opinions and abstruse Speculations; or in the Performance of indifferent and useless Actions; or, indeed, that any thing can be Part of true Religion, but what has a tendency to make Men virtuous and happy. The Father of Mercies will never perplex our Minds, or burthen our Bodies, with any thing that signifies nothing.

Moses indeed gave to the *Jews* a carnal Law, a Law of Bondage; a Yoke, which neither they, nor their Posterity could bear; Statutes which were not good, and Judgments by which they could not live. But these were given them for the Hardness of their Hearts, and as Punishments for their manifold Sins and Iniquities. And besides, they were only to last for a Time, and afterwards give way to a simple, pure, and perfect Law, to a spiritual, innocent, and undefiled Religion; free from their own fond Superstitions, and the stale Idolatries of the *Gentiles*; not loaded either with Priests, Sacrifices, or Ceremonies; a Religion, which was to consist in Spirit and in Truth, and intended to make Men wiser and better.

It seems plain to me, that there is but one Article of Faith in all this Religion, and that Essential to the very Being of it; namely, that *Jesus is the Messiah*: Without this preliminary Acknowledgment, his Mission could not have been owned, nor his Precepts obeyed; which are nothing else but Exhortations to Love, and Directions for social Happiness; and which he has enforced, by annexing eternal Rewards to the Observance of them. Hitherto Virtue had expected its Reward in this Life; but our Saviour gave new Sanctions to it, by *bringing Life and Immortality to Light*.

There is no Proposition in all Scripture more evidently reveal'd, or laid down in more positive and express Terms, than that the Confession of this Truth, was the Basis and Support of Christianity, the *unum magnum* requisite to be believed: Every thing else is practical Duty, and Belief is no farther concern'd in it, than as it produces Practice. For before we can think our selves obliged by a Precept, we must be satisfied of its Reasonableness, or of the Legislator's Authority.

The World had been so long corrupted by Superstition, and deluded and abused by selfish and lying Priests, who taught Wickedness for Virtue, and Nonsense for Philosophy, and placed Devotion in foolish Ceremonies and Sacrifices, and in ridiculous Cringes,

Cringes, antick Vestments and Grimaces, that nothing less than a Divine Legislator, with the Power of Miracles, could restore Men to their Senses and to Natural Religion. The sole Article therefore that our Saviour made necessary to be believed was, That he came from God, and acted by the Authority of God. Then every one would see the Impossibility that he could deceive or mislead Men, and consequently would take his Word for every thing else, in the Sense he understood it.

And this Proceeding was agreeable to eternal Reason; namely, to make nothing necessary in Belief, which was not necessary to Practice; for what Purpose could be served in obliging Men to believe, or rather to say they believed, mysterious and unintelligible Propositions? Such Articles are only the Watch-words of a Party, and can never be the Objects of real Assent; for no Man can be said to believe what he does not understand, and has not suitable Ideas of, as far as his Belief goes. We must understand the Meaning of every Term in a Proposition, before we can assent to it or dissent from it; for Words, of which we do not understand the Signification, are the same to us as if they had no Signification at all. How much therefore more honest and prudent would it be to own, at first, our Ignorance concerning certain abstruse Speculations, than to form

form Propositions about them, pretend to define and explain them, and then confess that we do not understand our own Definitions and Explanations; and call out Heresy and Atheism, when we are desired to speak intelligibly, and tell what we mean?

But to the Proofs from Scripture: *John* iii. 8. says, *He that believeth in him is not condemned; but he that believeth not, is condemned already.* And v. 36. *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting Life; and he that believeth not on the Son, shall not see Life.* And chap. vi. 40. *Every one who seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may live eternally.* And v. 51. *I am the living Bread which came down from Heaven; if any Man eat of this, he shall live for ever.* And *Acts* x. 43. *To him all the Prophets bear Witness, that through his Name, whoever shall believe in him, shall receive Remission of Sins.* And chap. xvi. v. 31. *And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy House.* And *Rom.* chap x. v. 9. *If thou shalt confess with thy Mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine Heart, that God hath raised him from the Dead, thou shalt be saved.* 1st Epistle of *John*, chap. iv. v. 2, 3, and 15. and chap. v. ver. 1. to the same purpose.

These, with many more plain and direct Texts, make only this Article necessary to be believed, and supersede all others. Nor is this required of us, barely because it is

434 *The Independent Whig.*

true, or to gain adventitious Honour to the Deity, who wants not the Applause of poor mortal Men; for such Belief could signify nothing: But it was required of us to obtain Obedience to his Commands, and direct our Practice, to promote virtuous Actions, and the Principles which produce them. *John*, chap. v. ver. 24. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my Word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting Life.* And chap. viii. v. 31. *Jesus said to those Jews which believed in him, if ye continue in my Word, then are ye my Disciples indeed.* So that Faith in Christ is not enough, unless we obey his Word; or rather, we cannot be truly said to believe in him, whilst we reject his Commandments. 1st Epistle General of St. *John*, chap. ii. v. 3, 4. *And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his Commandments: He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his Commandments, is a Lyar, and the Truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his Word, in him verily is the Love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.*

Let us therefore see what are those Commands, in the Observance of which Christianity consists. It does not consist in the Observance of *Days, nor Months, nor Time, nor Years*, Gal. iv. and 9. And Rom. xiv. v. 5. *One Man esteemeth one Day above another, another Man esteemeth every Day alike: Let every Man be fully persuaded in his own Mind.*

It does not consist in positive Institutions, in Forms and Ceremonies. 1 Cor. chap. vii. v. 19. *Circumcision is nothing, and Uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the Commandments of Christ.* And Gal. vi. v. 15. *In Christ Jesus, neither Circumcision availeth any Thing, nor Uncircumcision, but a new Creature.* Gal. v. ver. 6. to the same Purpose.

It does not consist in Meats nor Drinks, in Fish nor in Flesh. 1 Cor. chap. viii. v. 8. *Meat commendeth us not to God; for neither if we eat, are we the better; nor if we eat not, are we the worse.* But take heed lest this Liberty of yours become a Stumbling-Block to them that are weak. And Rom. xiv. v. 17. *The Kingdom of God is not Meat nor Drink; but Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost.*

It consists not in long Prayers, nor in many Prayers. Mat. vi. v. 7. *When ye pray, use not vain Repetitions, as the Heathens do; for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking.* Be ye not therefore like them; for the Father knoweth what Thing ye have need of before ye ask. Indeed, it seems plain to me from this Text, as well as from the Reason of the Thing; that Prayer itself becomes chiefly a Duty, as it raises our Minds, by a Contemplation of the Divine Wisdom, Power and Goodness, to an Acknowledgment of his repeated Bounties to Mankind; and as it disposes us to an Imitation of those high Perfections,

436 *The Independent Whig.*

and to be merciful and beneficent to one another. For it is absurd to suppose, that we can direct the All-wise Being in the Dispensations of his Providence; or can flatter or persuade him out of his eternal Decrees. If therefore any Texts in Scripture seem to carry a contrary Implication, I conceive they ought to be understood with the same Allowances as those are, which speak of God's Hands and Feet, and of his being subject to human Passions.

It does not consist in Sacrifices performed in pompous Churches and magnificent Buildings, or in consecrated Trinkets. Acts xvii. v. 24, 25. *God, that made the World, and all Things therein, seeing that he is Lord of Heaven and Earth, dwelleth not in Temples made with Hands, neither is worshipped with Mens Hands, as though he wanted any thing, seeing he giveth to all Life and Breath, and every Thing.* Acts vii. v. 48, 49, 50. *The most High dwelleth not in Temples made with Hands. Heaven is his Throne, and Earth is his Footstool; what House will ye build to me, saith the Lord; or where is the Place of my Rest? Hath not my Hand made all Things?*

His Being is universal, not confin'd to Churches, Chappels, Choirs, nor Altars; but his Presence is every where alike, and not more immediately in one Place than another. Acts xvii. v. 27, 28, 29. *He is not far from every one of us, for in him we live*

live and move, and have our Being, as certain also of your own Poets, have said, for we are his Offspring; for as much therefore as we are the Offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto Gold or Silver, or Stone graven by Art or Man's Device.

The Almighty has no favourite Opinions, Sects and Nations. *Acts x. v. 34, 35.* And Peter opened his Mouth and said, Of a Truth, I perceive that God is no Respector of Persons; but in every Nation he that feareth him and worketh Righteousness, is accepted of him. *Rom ii. v. 11.* There is no Respect of Persons with God. *Colos. iii. v. 11.* There is neither Greek, nor Jew, Circumcision, nor Uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, Bond nor Free, but Christ is all, and in all. *Gal. iii. v. 28.* There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither Bond nor Free, there is neither Male nor Female, for ye are all one in Jesus Christ.

How therefore shall we worship him? how know his Will? *St. John* tells us, chap. vii. v. 16, 17. If any Man will do God's Will, he will know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God or not: That is as much as to say, "Make use of the Judgment which God has given you; and see whether the Doctrine taught you, be worthy of an Omnipotent Author; see whether it teaches Peace and Love to your Neighbour, Compassion to

438 *The Independent Whig.*

“ all in Distress, Forbearance of Injuries,
 “ Humanity and indulgence to all who dif-
 “ fer from you, Duty to Parents, Submis-
 “ sion and Obedience to the Laws of your
 “ Country, and Charitableness and Benevo-
 “ lence to all Mankind, and even to the
 “ Brute Creation; then you may be sure
 “ such Doctrine comes from God. But if
 “ it breathes forth Revenge, and implacable
 “ Hatred; if it raises Mobs, Civil Wars,
 “ and Persecutions, for trifling Opinions; if
 “ it has for it's End Ambition and worldly
 “ Pride, and overturns every thing Sacred
 “ and Civil, which stands in its Way; if it
 “ encourages the worst Men, and oppresses
 “ the best; if it discourages Industry, and
 “ depopulates Nations; then there are plain
 “ Traces of Satan's, or the *Papish* Priest's
 “ Foot in it, and such a Religion can never
 “ come from God,

When you have made this your best Use
 of the Faculties God has given you, your
 Endeavours will certainly be accepted by
 him; and you will meet all the Reward
 which attends the judging right, since you
 have done all in your Power to do so: For
 God puts upon no Man the *Aegyptian* Task
 of making Bricks without Straw; nor re-
 quires any thing which you cannot perform.
Rom. chap. ii. v. 10, 11. Glory, Honour,
and Peace, to every Man who worketh Good;
to the Jew first, and then to the Gentile; for

as many as have sinned without Law, shall be punished without Law: and those that have sinned in the Law, shall perish by the Law. And, v. 14. 15. For when the Gentiles, which have not the Law, do by Nature the Things of the Law, they are a Law unto themselves: Which sheweth the Work of the Law written in their Hearts; their Conscience also bearing them Witness; and their Thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.

So that the *Gentiles* themselves are to be judged by their Sincerity, and not condemned for involuntary Errors. *Rom. xiv. v. 10, 11, 12. 13. Why dost thou judge thy Brother? As I live, saith the Lord, every Knee shall bow to me, and every Tongue shall confess to God; so then every one of us shall give an Account to God. Let us not, therefore, judge one another any more. And, v. 22. we are told who will be judged to Happiness; Happy is he who condemneth not himself in that Thing which he alloweth. 1 Epistle General of St. John chap. iii. v. 21. Beloved, if our Hearts condemn us not, then have we Confidence towards God.*

Cornelius, tho' a Heathen, is commended in *Acts* the xth, v. 2. as a devout Man, and one that feared God with all his House, which gave much Alms to the People, and prayed to God always: And *Lydia*, a Seller of Purple, tho' neither a Jew nor a Christian, is said to

440 *The Independent Whig.*

be a *Worshiper of God*, and one *whose Heart God had open'd*, before she heard the Preaching of *Paul*, Acts xvi. v. 14.

This comprehensive Charity, this Spirit of publick Beneficence, runs every where through the New Testament; nor can I find any Precept there given, but what is manifestly advantageous to Mankind, conducing to their present Happiness, and deducible from eternal Reason, and the Result of it. *Mat. xxii. v. 35, to 39. A Lawyer ask'd of our Saviour, which is the great Commandment of the Law? And Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind. This is the first and great Commandment: And the second is like unto it; Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self: Upon these Two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.*

Another Lawyer asks of him, (*Luke x. 25.*) *What shall I do to obtain eternal Life? and he said unto him, What is written in the Law? how readeest thou? And he said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Soul, and all thy Strength, and all thy Mind, and thy Neighbour as thy self. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: Do this and thou shalt live. And chap. xviii. v. 18, and 20, &c. A certain Ruler ask'd him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal Life? And Jesus said, Thou knowest the Com-*
mand-

mandments: Do not commit Adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false Witness; honour thy Father and thy Mother. He indeed adds afterwards another Condition, which was to sell all he had and give it to the Poor; which the Ruler could not bring himself to comply with: tho' I dare say he would have promised to have believed Creeds by the Dozen, if those would have done him any service. But I cannot find, that in all Scripture, our Saviour does impose upon us the Belief of one Modern Creed, or of any other but that He was the Messiah.

Chap. xviii. v. 8. Zaccheus, a Publican, saith unto the Lord, half of my Goods I give unto the Poor; and if I have taken any thing from any Man by false Accusation, I restore him four fold: And Jesus said unto him, this Day is Salvation come unto thy House; without asking him one Question about his Faith.

Rom. xiii. v. 8, 9. Owe no Man any thing but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the Law: For this, Thou shalt not commit Adultery, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false Witness, thou shalt not covet; and if there is any other Commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this Saying, namely, thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self. The same Doctrine, in another Place, is thus shortly described; By this all Men shall know that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another. So that the
Love

442 *The Independent Whig.*

Love of God, and of our Neighbour, is the Whole Duty of a Christian. The first implies the Worship of God, or rather is the true and very Worship of God *in Spirit and in Truth*; and the latter comprehends all the Moral and social Virtues. 1st Epistle of John, chap. iv. v. 7, 8. *Beloved, let us love one another, for Love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God; he that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is Love.* v. 16. *God is love; and he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.* And, chap. v. ver. 3. St. John defines what the Love of God is; namely, *for this is the Love of God, that we keep his Commandments.*

This appear still more evident, when we examine, for what Virtues and Crimes Men will be rewarded, and punished, eternally. Matth. Chap. xxv. v. 31. *When the Son of Man shall come in his Glory, and all the holy Angels with him, then shall he sit upon the Throne of his Glory, and before him shall be gather'd all Nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as the Shepherd divideth the Sheep from the Goats; and he shall set the Sheep on the Right Hand, and the Goats on the Left. Then shall the King say to them on the Right Hand, Come, ye Blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World: for I was hungry, and ye gave me Meat;*

Meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me Drink ; I was a Stranger, and ye took me in ; naked, and ye clothed me ; I was sick, and ye visited me ; in Prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall he say also to them on the Left Hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels ; for I was hungred, and ye gave me no Meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no Drink ; I was a Stranger, and ye took me not in ; naked, and ye clothed me not ; sick and in Prison, and ye visited me not.

But the Want of Faith is here objected to no Man: No one is rewarded, or punished, for believing, or not believing, in Transubstantiation, Consubstantiation, or the Real Presence ; in Predestination or Free-will ; or for having, or not having, right or wrong Conceptions of the Trinity in Unity, the Incarnation, Hypostatick Union, infinite Satisfaction, &c. Nor is the Divine Right of Bishops, Presbyters, and Tithes, once mention'd. Not a Word about Obedience to Spiritual Sovereigns, and Ecclesiastical Princes, or about our receiving the Sacraments from a regular Priest, descended in a right Line from the Apostles.

Such a Religion as this, which I have described, is agreeable to the Divine Justice ; which does not punish any Man for speculative Opinions, and especially for Opinions which neither do Good nor Hurt to
any

444 *The Independent Whig.*

any one, and for Opinions which no one can help. “ This is a Religion every way
 “ worthy of its eternal Author; and we
 “ may know *by the Doctrine, that it comes*
 “ *from God.* It is a Religion for Men of
 “ Sense, for Philosophers, for honest Men;
 “ and comprehensible too by the meanest
 “ Vulgar, without a Guide; a Religion of
 “ Reason, free from the blind Mazes and
 “ studied Intricacies of Popish Priests, and
 “ beneficial to Society at first View. It
 “ despises apish Gestures, and external Bu-
 “ foonery; and effectually prevents, and
 “ puts an End to, all inhumane Fierceness,
 “ and holy Squabbles, ever occasioned by
 “ the selfish Religions of corrupt Priests.
 “ It leaves not unhappy Men in perpe-
 “ tual Doubts and Anxieties, nor tosses and
 “ tumbles them, for Relief, out of one Su-
 “ perstition into another; but esteems them
 “ all alike.


“ In short, this is a Religion, which eve-
 “ ry wise and honest Man would wish to be
 “ Religion; a Religion of Charity, the *Re-*
 “ *ligion* of JESUS; and this is THE INDE-
 “ PENDENT WHIG’S *Religion.*





THE INDEX:

A.

-  Aron, (*a High Priest*) *cheats the Israelites of their Earrings, 97. Encourages them to Idolatry,* *ibid.*
- Abraham, *the Covenant with him, its Clearness,* 61
- Advice, *why seldom taken, 2.*
- Almighty God, *not to be judg'd of as Men are,* 429
- Altar-Pieces, *a Description of them,* 248
- Apollos, *a Primitive Preacher in the Acts, never ordained,* 69
- Apostate Clergy, *to reclaim them to the Church the Business of this Paper,* 115
- Apostles, *the Eleven, lost no Credit by Judas hanging himself, 15. Their Doctrines proved by Miracles, 31. Their Disinterestedness, ib. The Qualifications required to succeed them, 54. An Analogy between them and modern Divines, 55, 56. The Impossibility of succeeding them, 56. Their Conduct, 63. How they executed their Commission to preach the Gospel, 392, 393. They gave the Holy Ghost to all that believed,* 394, 395
- Archbishops and Bishops *derive their Characters from the Crown, 96. Archbishop of Canterbury, his severe Character of High-Church Priests,* 103
- Aristotle,

The INDEX.

- Aristotle**, a strange Observation concerning him, 195
- Articles Ecclesiastic**, seldom subscribed in their honest and original Meaning, 125, & seq.
- As**, the gravest of all Beasts, 116
- Atheism**, never can be introduc'd among the People; 323. Nor overthrow Religion, 324. The wicked and gainful Reasons of the Outcry of the Priests about it, *ib.* and 325. They promote Practical Atheism under Colour of combating Speculative Atheism, *ib.* The Villanies committed by Priests, as bad as those committed by Atheists, 325 to 327. The priestly Atheism of false swearing, 329, 330. The profane Jest they make about the sacred Ties of an Oath, *ib.* Their sly and execrable manner of promoting this sort of Atheism, *ib.* and 331. Being Atheists they are yet good Churchmen, *ib.* How much worse they are than all other Atheists, 332. How much their Atheism is aggravated by a lying Pretence to Religion, 333. Atheism, which produces no ill Action, is better than a Religion that does, *ib.* The Enmity to Toleration of Religion and Conscience, prov'd to be Atheism, and the High Priests to be guilty of this Atheism, by many Arguments and Instances, 334 to 341. High Church Priests guilty of Atheism, by subverting all Morality. Proofs of this, and Instances, 344 to 352. High Priests the greatest Atheists, 358 to 360
- Atheists**, in what Sense preferable to wicked Priests, 19. Speculative Atheists owe their Rise to Priestcraft, 353 to 357
- Authority (human) in Religion**, its Absurdity, 138. No where appointed by God, 137. A Character of it, 212, 213. Wherein it consists, 214. Disclaimed and prohibited by our Saviour, 385. Proofs of this, *ib.* and 386 to 388. But the Opinion and Practices of High Church Men, different, 388, 389

The INDEX.

B.

- B**elief, by what supported, 178
Bible, best understood without selfish Guides, 141.
*The Use and Excellency of it, 286, & seq. Dread-
 ed, suppress'd, and calumniated by most Priests, 287,
 288. It ought to be read, without Regard to the
 Opinions and Interpretations of weak and fallible
 Men, 289. The Reason of this, 290. By what
 Acts and Prejudices the reading of it is render'd
 useless, 291. The Encouragements given for un-
 derstanding it wrong, 292. Mr. Chillingworth's
 Observations hereupon, ib. and 293*
Bishops, made by Letters Patents without any Elec-
 tion, 93. Formerly in Scotland, durante bene
 Placito, *ib.* Exercise Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction by
 Commission from the Crown, 99. Bishops and Clergy
 created by Act of Parliament, 102. How apt to
 differ, 108. Their divine Right independent of the
 Pope, the peculiar Whimsey of our perjur'd High
 Church Men, 112. Whether 'tis agreeable to their
 Ecclesiastical Dignity to bless their own Table, 147
Bowing to the East, how to be regarded, 276

C.

- C**ALL of the Holy Ghost, how little believ'd by those
 that make most Noise about it, 71. A plain Proof
 of this, *ib.* Was quite another thing formerly, *ib.*
 What is meant by it now, *ib.* and 72
Cæsar, changes the Commonwealth into a Tyranny,
 without changing the Names of the Magistrates, 82
Canon, (the Second) Excommunicates all who call in
 question the King's Authority in Spirituals, 99
Celibacy, how abus'd and perverted by Priestcraft, 163
Censure Ecclesiastic, deriv'd from the Law, 99
Ceremonies, (Popish) opposite to the Genius of the
 Gospel, 231. They are the Effects and Concomitants
 of

The INDEX.

- of Bigotry, 232. Are pernicious to Religion, 233. The mischievous Effects of them, ib. and 234. The ridiculous Reasons brought to support them, expos'd, 234 to 237. The Priestly Policy of them, 238 and 243. The Pagan Religion consisted altogether in Ceremonies; the Use their Priests made of them, 240. And how they abused the People by them, ib. and 242. The Ceremonies of the Mass expos'd, 244 and 245.*
- Chaplains, an Enquiry into their Original, 144. They are expensive Domesticks, 143. Their Jorry Employment formerly, 145. But much mended now, 147. Instances of this, ib. and 148. Their Facetiousness and Sawciness, ib. They busy themselves with all Matters, 149. Divide Families into Factions, ib. They are excellent Bowlers, zealous Topers, and eminent Whisk players, ib. Their Pride and Primness, 150. Are Spies upon the Wealthy, and dangerous in Families, ib. Instances of the Mischiefs they do, 150, 151. The good ones excepted, ibid.**
- Charity, how abus'd by High Priests, 166. How apt to be misapplied, 202, 203**
- Christian Religion, a Character of it, 430. It contains but one Article of Faith, 431. Nothing necessary in it but what produces Practice, 432. Commands us to believe nothing but what we can comprehend, ib. Proofs of all this, 433 to 435. In what it does consist, 436, 437. And in what it does not consist, 437 to 441**
- Christianity, the Plainness of it, 51, 52**
- Christians, all alike empowered to exercise all the Functions of their Religion, 52. How distinguished from Reprobates and High Priests, 177. Their Unanimity and Benevolence towards each other, till their Priests enflamed and divided them, 314. The wicked Means and Arts by which they did so, ib. The common Right they all have to preach Christ, 394, 398**
- Church.

The INDEX.

- Church of England, *what its great Characteristic*, 91
- Church, *the best constituted one, a sure Mark of it*, 149. *The Three High Churches in England, an Account of them*, 404 to 411. *Church, by Law establish'd, what it is*, 405
- Circumcision, (*a Jewish Sacrament*) *not celebrated by the Priests*, 60
- Civil Magistrate *has seldom any Interest to corrupt Religion*, 96
- Clergy, *ill ones have made a Babel of the Gospel*, 10. *Bely Christ and his Apostles*, *ib.* *Once the Almsmen of the People*, *ib.* *Since the Masters of Mankind*, *ib.* *Their strange Apostacy from Christianity*, *ib.* *First intended for a Militia against Satan*, 11. *But enslave those that employ'd them*, *ib.* *Their impious Positions and Politics*, *ib.* *Their bloody Practices and Uncharitableness*, 11, 12. *Their eternal Squabbles and mutual Cursing*, 12. *They pervert Religion to support Tyranny*, *ib.* *Are Enemies to good Princes, preach up Sedition and Blood, are the Incendiaries of Rebellion and Assassination, and by these Means acquire Power and Wealth*, 13. *The Good secured by punishing the Bad*, 20. *Instructions to them*, 25, 26. *For the most part the least qualified of any Society of Men, to interpret the Scripture for others*, 27 & seq. *Always cramp'd in their Education in Schools and in the Universities*, 29. *Educated generally upon Charity*, *ib.* *Swear to Notions before they understand them*, *ib.* *Their Business is not to find out Truth. Their Gain tack'd to Opinions establish'd by Popes in ignorant Ages*, 30. *Their Temporal Grandeur, how dangerous it is to call it in Question*, 31, 32. *To be manumitted from a State of Darkness and Servitude*, *ib.* *Ought not to be debarr'd from a free Search after Truth. Their manner of Arguing with the Church of Rome, contradicts their manner of Arguing with Protestant Dissenters*, 35. *Their strange manner of treating the*

The INDEX.

- Bible and the Dissenters, 36. How they learn to be Successors of the Apostles, 54, 55. Cost the People more than the whole Civil and Military List, 80. And yet ! ib. At the Reformation throw themselves at the King's Mercy, and disgorge their ill-gotten Wealth, and renounce their ill-us'd Power by a publick Petition, 92. That Petition chang'd into an Act of Parliament, 93. Swear to all the Acts of Parliament which assert all Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction to the Crown only, and subjected to Præmunire if they contradict the same, 96. Bound by the 37th Canon to observe the old Jurisdiction of the Crown over the Ecclesiastics, can do no publick Act without the King's Authority, profess to receive all Jurisdiction from the Crown, never suffer'd to controvert the Prerogative, 100. Their Insolence reprehended in the Queen's Reign, 101. The chief End of their Appointment and Hire, 152. The great Revenue paid them, whether well or ill bestow'd, 153. It is the Duty of the Laity to make them useful, ibid.*
- Clergymen, the Way to that Calling very easy, 70. The Labour of a Clergyman bought and sold, ib. What Advantages might be expected from their Education, Profession and Studies, 120. Yet are often worse than all Men, 121. In too many Countries begin the World with a notorious Breach upon natural Honesty and Innocence, 124. Going into Orders pretend to be mov'd by the Holy Ghost, but often really by other Motives, ib. How strangely they differ about the Sense of the Articles, 125. Instances of this, ibid. In former Reigns devote the Laity to Chains, 129. Their Inconsistency, 129, 130*
- Collier (Mr.) corrects St. Paul, 143. His Description of the Office of a Chaplain, 144. The strange Power he gives to Chaplains, ib. Puts the Clergy in joint Commission with the Angels, 145. Quarrels with an Act of Parliament for an odd Reason, ib. Will allow a Chaplain no Superior, 146*
- Common-**

The INDEX.

- Common-Prayer-Book enacted by Parliament, 95
 Conformity, when a Sin, 197. How wickedly con-
 tended for, 199
 Consecration, (Popish) how it began, 117. Its ridi-
 culous Use, *ibid.* Its foolish Consequences, 189 to
 191. Forbid by the Law, 192. Its Absurdity, 198.
 No warrant for it from Reason or Scripture, 189.
 Its Pagan Original, 199
 Conscience, the only Guide in Religion, 283 to 285
 Convocation, differs with the Apostles, 69. The ri-
 diculous Use made of them by High-Church Statesmen,
 118. An Instance of this, *ib.*
 Councils, (General) a Character of them, 40, 41.
 Cannot meet, and would only scold or fight if they
 did, 109
 Covenant, the first, its Clearness, 61
 Creeds, When to be assented to, and how to be try'd, 38.
 The Imposition of them contrary to Reason and Cha-
 rity, *ib.* Dangerous to Religion, 39. The wicked
 Ends and secular Motives for making them, *ibid.*
 Begin in Pride and end in Cruelty, 40. Procured by
 ambitious Popes and Emperors, 41
 Crimes, what Crimes are damning, 442, 443

D.

- DEacons, the Difference between modern Deacons,
 and Scripture Deacons, 372
 Decalogue, its clearness, 61. No Body of Men set
 apart to explain it, *ib.*
 Devotion, consists neither in mechanical Joy nor Sor-
 row, 301
 Disputes, what sorts, make us neither wiser nor better, 89
 Distinction between matters Civil and Ecclesiastic, a
 Chimerical one, 104
 Doctrines, how to know certainly whether they come
 from God, 142
 Dodwel (Mr.) his Character, 210
 Dominion (Ecclesiastical) the Parent of Popery, 103
 Duty,

The INDEX.

*Duty, the Importance of it implies its Certainty, 21.
Necessary Duties easy and plain, 89*

E.

E*Cclesiastics, (High ones) the Infamy of one adopted by all, 15. Their want of Temper, Folly, and Ill-breeding, ib. and 16. Have uncommon Advantages above other Societies, and yet not content, ib. The Difference betwixt other Societies and them; their Temporal and Ghostly Privileges enumerated, ib. Befriended by natural Superstition, 17. If not respected, their own Fault, ib. The Causes why they are contemn'd, 18. Their Folly in demanding Respect, while they earn Infamy, ib. The Advantages accruing to the good Clergy, by exposing the Bad, 19. A Million of 'em kept in Pay for the best part of 1700 Years to teach and reform the World, and it is not yet more reform'd or better taught than when they began: but, on the contrary, grows worse, 25. Their Office, every Man left at Liberty by the Word of God to perform it, 26. (Popish) by what impious Means they acquired their Riches 91. Ecclesiastics of all Ranks often degraded by the King's Authority, and by that of the Law, 98. Instances of this, ib. Ecclesiastic Princes, how readily created, 109. An Irish Bishop creates them for a Pot of Ale apiece, ibid.*

Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction vested in the King only, 94 to 96

Education, the Use and Abuse of it, by Philosophers and Priests, 216, 217. The ill Effects of a University Education, 221. A bad one worse than none, 224, 225

Englishmen, their peculiar Felicity, 6

Episcopacy and Geography, their Importance, 173

Erastus, proves the Clergy Creatures of the State, 91. His Principles prevail'd at the Reformation. 92

Errors, how to be secur'd against them, 138, 140, 141. This not to be done by the help of Priests, 139

Excom:

The INDEX.

Excommunication, *what*, 54. *Primitive, what*, 383,
384

F.

- F**Aculties, (*our*) given by God to be us'd, 29
- Faith (*implicit*) dangerous in Government as well as in Religion, 7. Not to be exercis'd by Proxy, 27. How distinguish'd from Credulity, 37, 38. How tried, 193. How little it signifies without Morality, *ib.* and 194 to 196. What is meant by it, 206, 207
- False Learning, the great Mischief of it, 223. & seq.
- Fasting, the roguish Use made of it by the Pagan Priests, 259. Not made a Duty by the Law of Nature, 260. No stated Fast appointed by the New Testament, 261. The Gain the Popish Priests make of it, 263. Priests have no Power to enjoyn it, 264. The Absurdity of such a Power, 264, 265. The Evils occasioned by it, *ib.* and 266. Fasting and Feasting made necessary Duties, tho' Contradictions to each other, 297. Fasting, how little it signifies to Religion, 201, 202, 203. How little practis'd by the Clergy, 204. And yet how gainful to them formerly, 205. Their Policy in appointing it, *ibid.*
- Fathers, want Orthodoxy, 211. Instances of this, *ib.*
- Free-Thinker, the Character of that Author, 5.
- Free-Thinker Extraordinary, the Character of that Paper, 5, 6

G.

- G**OD, his Glory promoted by Mens temporal Happiness, 202. His Word not believ'd without Evidence, 208. How certainly to please him, 281, 282
- Gospel, (*the*) the plainest Institution in the World, 62
- Gravity, always a Characteristic of Imposture, 209. What it is, and what it produces, 304. Its Influence upon the Vulgar, *ibid.*
- Grotius (Hugo) his Character of Ecclesiastical History, 122

H.

The INDEX.

H.

- H**abit, good or bad, its Force, 28. *The Strength of it,* 224
- H**allifax (Lord) a wise Saying of his to the Witty Dr. Echard, 116
- H**eathen Priests, their Arts, 131
- H**eraldry, (Ecclesiastic) whence deriv'd, 106
- H**eresy, the Correction of it reserv'd to the Law, 95
- H**ereticks, are Friends to Virtue, Religion, and Society when they live well, 200. *The cruel Usage they who are called so, meet with,* 291
- H**icks (Dr.) the blasphemous Trash vented by him and Lesley, 49
- H**ierarchy (ours) a Creature of the Civil Power, 102
An Independent one of the State, not consistent with the Goodness of God, nor with Christianity, nor with Civil Happiness and Liberty, 375 to 377. The Absurdity and Impossibility of it, ib. The ridiculous manner in which it is prov'd, 377, 378
- H**igh Clergy, their Folly and Dishonesty in Railing at the Freedom of the Age, 76. *Pay no Regard to the Rule of Equity, 77. The Absurdity of their Behaviour, ib. Own themselves overcome, by calling out for Help. Their real Advantages, 78. Their pretended Danger, ib. How they differ from the first Christians, 79. This Consideration recommended to the Convocation, ib. The Inconsistency of their Pretensions and Practices, 305, 306. Hence the Cause of their Contempt, 307. They cause Ridicule, and rail at it, ib. A remarkable Instance of their Jealousy and Vigilance in behalf of their Trade, 307 to* 311
- H**igh Church Men, not Members of the Church of England, 101. *Are perjur'd in asserting their own Independency, ib. The strange Inconsistency of their Practices with their Principles, 113. Instances of this, 113 to 115. How much they hate good Men,* 212

The INDEX.

- High Church Notions, *the Madness, Disaffection, and Mischief they produce*, 103. *Few Low Church Clergy dare renounce them*, ib. *Opposite to Christianity*, 116
- High Church Priests, *the Tools and Drudges of Faction*, 118. *How capable the Laity are to teach them*, 119. *The Mischief they have done*, ib. *A Prayer for their Amendment*, ib. *Why more wicked than all other Men*, 122, & seq. *Subscribe the Articles without believing them, and abuse those that do*, 126. *Mislead those that follow them, and curse those that leave them*, 133. *Allow us to read the Bible, but not to make use of it*, ib. *How they treat Reason*, 134. *Confound Reason and Scripture*, 134, 135. *Their wild Behaviour and Contempt for Mankind*, ib. *Not troubled at the Extent of Paganism*, 176. *But alarm'd at Conscience and Dissenters*, 177. *Damn all the World without taking one Step to convert it*, ib. *A Sample of their Honesty and just Reasoning*, 250 to 254. *How grossly they pervert Truth and Piety, and abuse their Followers*, 255 to 257. *They do not suffer them to know the Christian Religion*, 258
- Holiness, *what it is and what it is not*, 185, 186
- Holy Spirit, *weak Men cannot speak clearer than him*, 58, 59
- Holy Ghost, *frequently bely'd by young Men seeking Orders*, 70. *When bely'd*, 124
- Holy Days, *what Idleness, Wickedness, and Debauchery are committed in them*, 300, 301. *Their Consequences*, 203, 204
- Humanity, *inseparable from Grace and Goodness*, 312

I.

JESUS CHRIST, *the certain Rule given by him for trying of Doctrines*, 138. *How easily he is to be distinguish'd from Impostors*, 139, 140.

Ignorance, *the difference between natural and acquired*, 2

Independent,

The INDEX.

Independent, how this Paper is so,	8.
Whig his Reverence for the good Clergy,	9.
<i>Rejoices that there are many such,</i>	ib.
<i>And in their usefulness to Mankind,</i>	ib.
<i>Shews how to be distinguish'd from the Bad,</i>	ib.
<i>Lifts himself under the Banner of the good Clergy,</i>	ib.
<i>Serves Christianity by exposing Priestcraft,</i>	ib. and 10.
<i>Why he descends to write about Chaplains,</i>	143.
<i>His Religion,</i>	443, 444
Independency of a Protestant Church, its Absurdity,	
<i>Nonsense, and Impossibility,</i>	105 to 111
Infallibility, its Absurdity,	138
Indifferent Things, none in Religion,	284
Imposture, dreads a fair Enquiry, and why,	29.
<i>How supported,</i>	130.
<i>Dreads Examination,</i>	76
Infidels, often reckon'd good Church-Men,	199
Judgment, (our) ought to be at no Man's Service,	27
Jurisdiction-Ecclesiastic, own'd by the Clergy to proceed intirely from the Crown, and accepted by them in humble Terms from the Royal Bounty and Indulgence,	39

K

Kings, the Head of the Church in the amplest Manner,	94
---	----

L

L Abourer (Spiritual) every one to chuse his own,	66
Lais, a great Strumpet, but in an Ecclesiastical Sense a true Virgin,	45
Laity, not the Authors of the Contempt of the Clergy,	79.
<i>Nor answerable for the Degeneracy of the World,</i>	80.
<i>How much they exceed the Clergy in Religion,</i>	116
Laud, (Archbishop) his Zeal for the Religious Trumpery and Ceremonies of Rome,	246.
<i>His mad Manner of Consecrating St. Catharine's Church,</i>	ib. and 247.
<i>His illegal, and impious Innovations,</i>	ib.
Laws, Human and Divine, why, and how they differ,	22

The INDEX.

- Law**, the great Duties of it, want no Explication, 23.
The Impiety of asserting the contrary, ib. Jewish, its great Clearness, 56, 59. Appoints the Civil Magistrate to teach the People, 56. Who they are that swear to Laws, and rail at them, 111. Promulgation and Plainness, the Essence of a Law, 372. This more particularly true of the Divine Law, 373
- Layman**, a virtuous one, a more secure and proper Guide than a profane Priest, 69. Laymen, the only proper Authors of Church Reformation, 90. Qualify'd by the Law may exercise Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, 94, 95. Have the same Means of knowing Christ, that Priests have, and less Temptations to falsify his Gospel, 382, 383
- Learning**, how abus'd by the Priests, 167
- Levi**, that Tribe, the Twelfth part of the Jewish People, 66
- Liberty**, preserv'd by the Laity, in opposition to Priestcraft, 221
- Lion**, that Beast never uses Cunning, 76
- Low Churchmen**, the best and only Friends of the Church, 114, 115. High Churchmen its bitterest Enemies, ib.
- M.
- Machiavel**, his Advice how to change the Constitution of a State, 81
- Mahomet**, his Arts, 131
- Mankind**, how mislead in religious Matters, 50
- Man**, his first Thoughts naturally honest, 123
- Men**, their Decisions in Religion, how little to be regarded, 208, 209
- Metaphysical Distinctions**, of no Use to Religion, but of great Service to Priests, 86
- Milton**, his Sentiments of Chaplains, 147
- Misleaders of the World**, who, 24
- Mob**, (the) its Constancy to the Church, 117
- Moses**, the Lay Sovereign, prays for the People when (seduc'd by their High Priest) they provok'd God, 97. His Law, a Character of it, 430
- Multitude** (the) what Fooleries they take for Religion, 169, 170. A memorable Instance, ib.
- H h N.

The INDEX.

N.

- N**ecessary, every thing necessary in Scripture is plain, 65
 Nonsense, who in Possession of sanctifying it, 110
 Numa Pompilius, his Arts, 131

O.

- O**ath of Supremacy, what it is, 96. College Oaths
 often ridiculous, and impossible to be kept, 124
Ordination, what it requires, 67. It conveys nothing
 and neither mends the Heart, nor improves the Un-
 derstanding, 68. An Act of the Law, 99
Orders of Clergymen, taken by Men who never exer-
 cis'd the Function of Clergymen, 70
Opinions, the monstrous ones of High Church, 104. The
 Gain of them, ib. Abstruse ones, how little they sig-
 nify, 430
Owl, the gravest of all Birds, 116

P.

- P**arties in Religion, all pretend to be in the Right, 136
 Parliaments, at the Reformation, are warm with
 the Memory of sacerdotal Oppression, 96. How they
 dealt with the Clergy, ibid.
 Passover (a Jewish Sacrament) not celebrated by the
 Priests, 60
Peace of the Church, what it naturally signifies, 278,
 279. How broken, ib. Its Meaning perverted, 280.
 When lawful to break it, 281. Who they are that
 break it, 282. By what wicked Means 'tis often
 preserv'd, 285
Penance, how little it signifies to Religion, 294, 295.
 The terrible Lengths Priests have carried it, 296.
 Defined, 297. And exposed, 299. It is inconsi-
 stent with the Bounty and Mercy of God, 298, 299
People, abus'd by their Leaders, 84, 85
Perjury, how popular it renders High Church Priests,
 who abuse all that do not practise it, 127
Persecution, why first begun, and by whom, 179. They
 that suffer it generally in the right, 180. The End
 of

The INDEX.

- of Persecution, *ib.* and 181. Expressly forbid by our Saviour, and never practised by his Apostles, *ibid.* The dreadful Spirit and Effects of it, 182, 183. It is opposite to the Genius of the Protestant Religion, and of Christianity, 183, 184 Is a War against Conscience, *ibid.*
- Persecutors, Satan's Executioners. 172
- Pope, every Party has one, and is deceiv'd by him, 7. His Policy, 129
- Power (worldly) disavow'd by our Saviour, 45, 46. And by St. Paul, 46. And by St. Peter, *ib.* The Claim of it inconsistent with the Propagation of the Gospel, 48, 49. Power Ecclesiastical, how it ought to be prov'd, 53. Power, of no sort whatsoever, the only Power which the Clergy can claim; having disclaim'd all other Power upon Oath, 101. Power, and the Exercise of Power, that Distinction a Blunder of the High Church, 110. Powers, Apostolic, no Clergyman can exercise them, nor ought to pretend to them, 381, 382. Power mentioned in the Gospel relates intirely to the other World, 384. Power, Sovereign, cannot depend upon Ambiguities and Figures, 401, 402
- Prayer, not sooner heard in one Place than another, 188. How it becomes a Duty, 435, 436
- Preachers, the Primitive ones, undertook a Burden not a Command, 396. They were poor Men, *ib.* They had no Jurisdiction, nor pretended to any, 396 to 399
- Prejudices, why seldom resigned, 7
- Priests, High ones allarmed at this Paper, 14. Impatient of Contradiction, 32. A modern Description of them by our Blessed Saviour, 62. (Heathen) their Characters, 64. Create Deities after their own Likeness, *ib.* How they expose themselves, 72. How it comes to pass that they are for any Religion, 73. The Ground of their Quarrel with Conscience, *ibid.* All of them equally contend for Power, but differ about sharing it, 85. The Stress they lay upon Trifles,

The INDEX.

165. *How apt to be hot in Dispute*, 199. *Their Cruelty to the Laity*, 200, 201. *Their Arts to promote Ignorance*, 217, 218. *How they abuse the Laity*, 218, 219. *The Figure they make*, 226. *Their Temper and Breeding*, 227. *Their Awkwardness*, 228. *Compar'd to the Grotesque Figures in old Buildings*, 228. *Disfigure and destroy Religion, to support their own Claims*, 302, 303. *Their amazing Cruelty*, 315 to 320. *The Hardship put upon those that dispute with them*, 361. *No Priests instituted by the Gospel Dispensation*, 364 to 370
- Priestly Insolence, a remarkable Instance of it*, 92.
- Priestly Fopperies will not now pass for Wisdom*, 116.
- Priestly Dominion, its Impiety and Tyranny*, 373, 374
- Priestcraft, its poysonous Nature*, 160. *It corrupts every Thing*, ib. *Instances of this*, 161 to 167.
- Heathen and Popish, how much alike*, 413 to 415
- Priesthood, never possess the Power of Persecution, without using it*, 184, 185
- Private Judgment, the Necessity of it in Religion*, 213, 214
- Profligates, generally Orthodox, and why*, 39
- Professions, how try'd*, 195
- Propositions, how to be examin'd*, 37
- Prolocutors, not Necessary to the Almighty*, 59
- Prophecy, why ceas'd*, 59
- Public Virtue, its Decay*, 215. *And the Cause of it*, 216, 217
- Punishment, for Opinions of what ever kind, barbarous and unreasonable*, 179, 180

Q

QUakers, *some Account of them*, 154. *They are religious, but have no hired Clergy, allow'd by Mr. Norris to be a most considerable Sect*, 155. *Their Knowledge in Divinity*, ib. *Their Opinion about Tythes well-grounded, as also their Opinion about the Clergy*, 156. *They follow the Primitive Christians*

The INDEX.

Christians therein, ib. As likewise their Opinion against bearing Arms, 157. As also in their Principle of not swearing at all, ib. Are all capable of Reading, ib. Are fond of the Bible, 158. Contend for Private Judgment. Their excellent Regulations as a Society, 159. Gain by a Comparison with High Churchmen, and are not the worse for want of Clergy, ibid.
Quartilla, a Strumpet in Petronius, forgets that ever she was a Virgin, 155

R.

R*Reason, when, and why Men are against it, 81. The Use and Extent of it, 268, 269. It is a Ray of the Divinity, and essential to Religion, 270 to 272. It distinguishes the true Religion from false, 273, 274. Who are its Foes, ib. and 275*
Reformation, in Religion, who they are that always oppos'd it, 24. The Reformation in England, the Work of the Laity, but oppos'd by the Clergy, 84. What gave Occasion to it, ib. The Arts of the Ecclesiastics to defeat it, 85. The Reformation, the Spirit it produces, 219. Not carried far enough, 219, 220
Religious Liberty, the glorious Growth of it in this Reign, 342, 343
Religion, what the only Design of it, 8. The Two great Points of it, 21. The Religion establish'd, by what Arts to be alter'd, 83. When left to the Priests, always abus'd and sacrific'd to their Interest, 97. The Attempts of the High Clergy to change ours, but hinder'd by the Laity, 83. Religion, how propagated, 178. The Ends of it not serv'd by human Misery, 203. Why Instituted, 313. Natural to Man, and almost all Nations have some Religion, 321. The Folly and Outrages committed for false Religions, 322. The Use of Religion to Government, 323. The Advantages ill Priests make of Religion, and their Readiness

The INDEX.

- to change from one Religion to another for Gain, *ib.*
A remarkable Instance of this, *ib.* Religion a thing
 foreign from worldly Power, 380. In what manner
 taught by our Saviour, 380, 381, 383. Christian
 Religion made a Metaphysical Science, 51. The Ad-
 vantage of this to the Priests, *ib.* The True one, its
 Simplicity and Loveliness, 229. Disfigured by hu-
 man Inventions, 228, 230
 Reproof of small Faults, of small Service, 3
 Revelation, the absurdity of one that wants to be re-
 vealed, 22
 Ridicule, how much, and why the Priests hate it, 303.
 Cannot hurt Religion and Virtue, 304
 Rome (the Church of) why own'd by the High Clergy
 to be a true Church, 44. Her different Treatment by
 the English Clergy, now and formerly, 130. The
 Clergy of that Church, the Two principal Arts by
 which they support themselves, 132. Imitated by o-
 thers therein, *ibid.*

S.

- S**acraments, the Administration of them, not con-
 fin'd by our Saviour to any Set of Men whatso-
 ever, 54
 Sacrilege, the Cry of it not regarded at the Reforma-
 tion, 90, 91
 Sanctify'd Names, how little they signify, 210
 Sarum (late Bishop of) his Character of the Clergymen
 and Laymen, 121
 Satan, what would do him too much Credit, namely,
 making him a Match for a Million of consecrated
 Persons, 81
 School Divinity, its Usefulness and Absurdity, 24.
 Schoolmen, their Character, 210
 Scripture, address'd to all Men alike, 23. Some Parts
 of it, why obscure, 23, 24. Not given to make Work
 for Interpreters, 58. How abus'd by Priests, 166,
 167. Its Elogium, 379
 Simony,

The INDEX.

- Simony**, the Clergy sworn not to practise it, 121. In what Instances that Oath is often broken, 126, 127
Slavery, grows desirable through Habit, 34
Society, every voluntary one has a Right to create their own Pastors, and to judge them, 74. (Religious ones) an Account of their Beginning and Establishment, 390 to 392
Souls, not to be sav'd by Proxy, 27
Sounds, how Men are deluded by them, 171. Instances of this, 171, 172
Speculations, the Combustions rais'd by the Priests about such as signify nothing, 86. Instances of this, 86 to 88
Subjects, what worth a wise Man's Thoughts, 4
Succession, (uninterrupted) enquir'd into, 42. Not once mention'd in Scripture, ib. The Clergy at endless odds about it, 43. Instances of this, ib. 'Tis a Contradiction to the Reformation, ib. Cranmer disowns it, ib. Deriv'd from Antichrist, 44. The only one which has not been interrupted, 62. Modern Apostolical Succession, its Vanity, 375
Superstition, a Philosophical Account of it, 420 to 423. The Uses and Advantages the Heathen and Popish Priests make of it, 424. Their Arts to encrease it, 425 to 427

T.

- T****Rade**, the Parson's, what would spoil it, 81
Truth, receives Advantage from Examination, 29. Not to be discover'd by those who have an Interest against it, 30. Can never sin, 75. Needs no Masquerades, 76. How many Enemies it has, especially Spiritual Ones, 221. How it would prosper, were it encouraged, ib. & seq.
Testimony, Rules to try the Truth of it, 31
Tillotson, (Archbishop) a fine Observation of his, 50

U.

- V****irtues**, what Virtues are rewarded Eternally, 442. 443
 Univer-

The INDEX.

Universities, *the miserable State of Learning and Religion there*, 32, 220. *Too often initiate Youth into Perjury*, 124
 Vulgar, (the) *what sort of Religion pleases them best*, 304, 305. *High Church Vulgar, how they are misled, and their Reverence misplac'd*, 249 to 253

W.

WHimsies, *of private Doctors, what Contempt they deserve*, 123
 Whiston (Mr.) *his Charge upon the Clergy for not believing their own Articles*, 125
 Will of God, *a Rule to know it*, 374
 World, *the way to debauch it, is to debauch the Youth*, 123
 Words, *how they deceive the World* 6. *The abuse of them*, 277
 Writers, *the finest often neglect Important Subjects*, 4
 Writings, (Controversial) *the difference between those of Gentlemen and those of Divines*, 33

Y.

YOUTH, *how easily susceptible of Vice and Virtue*, 123

Z.

ZEal, (true) *a Definition of it, and Character of it*, 169. *False Zeal how much Mischief it does*, 168, 169. *It is brutish, implacable, and profane*, 174 *its terrible Character, and vile Pedigree*, 170, 171. *The Zeal of corrupt Priests, its Causes and Motives*, 172, 173. *How little they concern the Laity*, ib. *Often the Effect of Constitution*, 173, 175. *A remarkable Instance of this*, ib. *How apt Men are to be mistaken about it*, ib. *Christian Zeal, its Meekness and excellent Effects*, 174. *Inseparable from Charity*, ib. *Is an Enemy to all Severity*, ib. *Modern Zeal, its utter inconsistency with the Gospel*, 176. *Altogether unlike that of the Apostles*, ibid. *Zeal of High Church Priests, how wretchedly employ'd*, 176. *Not intended to promote Religion*, ib.



